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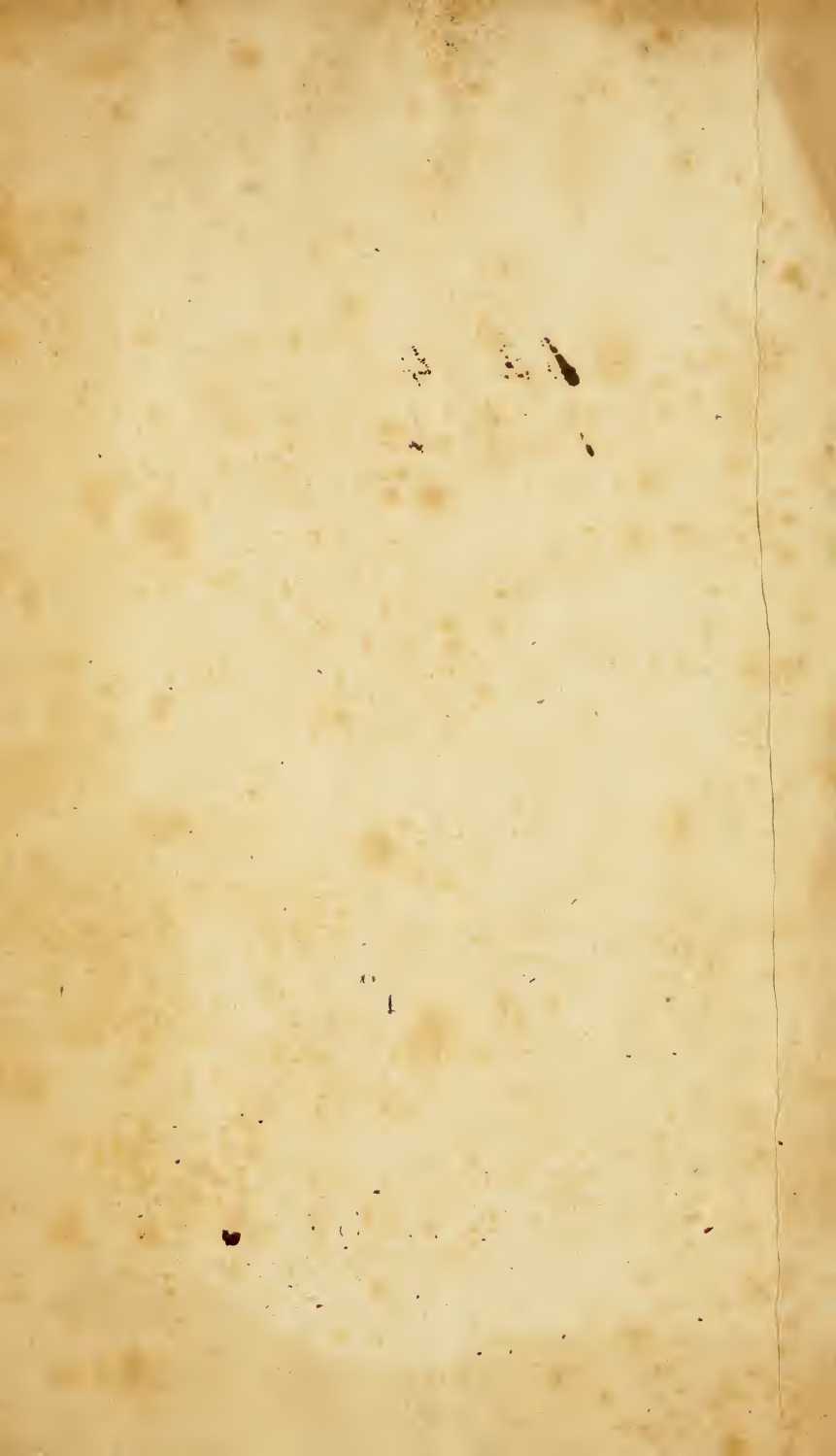
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THE  
ADVANTAGE AND NECESSITY  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN REVELATION,  
SHEWN FROM THE  
STATE OF RELIGION  
IN THE  
ANTIEN<sup>T</sup> HEATHEN WORLD:

ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND WORSHIP OF THE  
ONE TRUE GOD: A RULE OF MORAL DUTY: AND A STATE  
OF FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

*A Preliminary Discourse on Natural and  
Revealed Religion.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY JOHN LELAND, D. D.

AUTHOR OF THE VIEW OF THE DEISTICAL WRITERS, &c.

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VOLUME II.  
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# PREFACE

TO

## THE SECOND VOLUME.

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ALTHOUGH in the general preface prefixed to the former volume, I have given an account of the nature and design of this work, yet I think it not amiss to say something farther in the beginning of this volume, for removing or obviating some prejudices, which might be conceived against the plan I have formed, and the manner in which it is executed.

Some learned persons seem not willing to admit, that the main principles of religion and morality were originally communicated by Divine Revelation to the first parents of mankind, and from them conveyed by tradition to their posterity. They think it more probable, that they were led by their own natural sense and reason to the knowledge of those principles. I readily own, that those principles, when once discovered, will be found upon examination to be perfectly agreeable to the best reason of mankind; but I think enough is offered in this treatise to shew, that in fact the first notices of these things were communicated to the first ancestors of the human race by a revelation from God. And in this I have the satisfaction of agreeing with many eminent divines, and with those two great masters of reason, and who are justly reckoned among our best writers on the law of nature,

Grotius and Puffendorff. The supposing the knowledge of the main principles of religion to have been originally owing to a Divine Revelation, does not at all deny that those principles are really founded in the nature of things, and confirmed by the dictates of pure and unprejudiced reason. These things are perfectly consistent; and when taken together, give one a more extensive view of the wisdom and goodness of God in his dispensations towards mankind, and the various ways that have been taken for leading men into the knowledge of religion and morals. That this is most agreeable to the Mosaic accounts, is sufficiently shewn both in the former volume and in this. And that there were very antient traditions among the Heathen nations, concerning some of the main principles of religion, though in process of time greatly depraved and corrupted, appears from the accounts that are given us by the Heathen writers themselves.

But there is another objection which I have met with, and which deserves to be more particularly considered. It is this, That the making such a representation as I have done, of the state of the Pagan world, may possibly be turned to the disadvantage of natural religion itself, and may tend to the weakening those principles which lie at the foundation of all religion and morality.

If by natural religion be meant religion as it is founded in nature, and which may be proved to be agreeable to the best and soundest principles of human reason, there is nothing in this work that can bring any real prejudice to it. And though I am far from thinking that the Gospel is merely a republication of the law of nature, yet this may be safely affirmed, and is what I have endeavoured in the course of this work to shew, that it is one excellent design of the Christian Revelation to confirm and establish it, to place it in the properest light, and to clear it from that amazing load of rubbish which had been heaped upon it in a long succes-



sion of ages. Nowhere is natural religion, taken in the sense I have mentioned, so well understood, so clearly explained, and so strongly asserted, as where the Christian Religion is duly entertained and professed.

But if by natural religion be understood religion as it stands merely on the foot of the powers of unassisted reason, entirely independent on Divine Revelation, and as it was actually taught and professed by those who made the highest pretences to reason and religion in the Pagan world, I confess it has been one principal part of my design in this work to shew its weaknesses and defects. And as a high admiration of the antient philosophers, especially those who flourished in the celebrated nations of Greece and Rome, has inspired many with a contempt of the Holy Scriptures, and caused them to entertain mean and undervaluing thoughts of the Gospel of Christ, I cannot but think it a real service to religion, to shew how unfit those boasted lights of the Pagan world were to be the guides of mankind; and that they fell vastly short of the first teachers and publishers of Christianity, mean and illiterate as some have esteemed them.

The Scriptures make the most striking representations of the darkness and corruptions of the Heathen world. And the antient apologists for Christianity give the same account of the state of the Pagan nations. They set themselves to expose their gross idolatry and polytheism, the impurities and abominations of their religion and worship, their great corruption and dissoluteness of morals, and the uncertainties and contradictions of their best writers, and thence argue the great usefulness and necessity of the Christian Revelation, and the advantage it was of to mankind. And whoever would have a just and full view of the inestimable benefits and privileges we are made partakers of by the Gospel, ought by no means to lose sight of this.

It is not the intention of any thing that is said in this book to degrade and vilify human reason, as if it were of

no use in religion, and only fit to lead men astray. I am fully persuaded that reason, duly exercised and improved, is very friendly to religion and morals: and that the main principles of the Christian Religion, if set before men in a proper light, will approve themselves to right reason, when freed from vicious and sinful prejudices. It is by reason that we are enabled to detect false revelations, and to discern the proofs and evidences of the true, and the glorious characters of wisdom and goodness, of purity and truth, which shine in it. But I confess I am far from conceiving so high an opinion of reason, if left merely to itself in the present state of mankind, as some have entertained of it. I am fully convinced by arguments drawn from undeniable fact and experience, that reason, when puffed up with a presumptuous conceit of its own ability and strength, and neglecting or despising proper assistances, or when boldly intruding into things too high for it, or led aside by corrupt custom and mere human authority, by vicious prejudices and passions and carnal interests, is often apt to pass very wrong judgments on things, especially in divine matters. Nor do I apprehend, that it is any disparagement to reason, to lay open the faults and errors of those who have made the greatest pretensions to it, or that it follows from this, that reason is a vain thing, and has no certain foundations to rely upon. Thus, e. g. if some that have professed to govern themselves by reason, have entertained very wrong notions of God, of his perfections, attributes, and providence, it by no means follows, that the proofs of the divine nature and perfections, or of God's governing providence, are not built upon sure and solid grounds, or that reason is not able to discern the force of those proofs, when clearly set before it. In like manner with regard to morals, it would be wrong to conclude that there is no certainty in any moral principles, because some persons of great name have passed very false judgments in matters which appear to be of great impor-

tance in morality: or that there is nothing base or deformed in vicious actions or affections, because in some nations and ages, and in the opinion of persons pretending to superior wisdom, they have been regarded as matters of indifferency, and as either no faults at all, or very slight ones.

In the course of this work, especially in that part of it which relates to the state of morality in the Heathen world, I have been under a necessity of taking notice of several things which can scarce be mentioned without being offensive to virtuous minds, though frequently practised among those that have passed for the most learned and polite of the Heathen nations, and even by many of the philosophers themselves. The subject was so disagreeable to me, that I intended more than once to have passed it over altogether, or to have mentioned it very slightly, and only in a general way. But what determined me to insist upon a full proof was, that otherwise the charge might have been looked upon to be groundless and calumnious. And not only have some real friends to Christianity attempted to clear them from it, but others of a different character have taken occasion to censure the apostle Paul, as having made an unjust and odious representation of the state of the Gentile world, beyond what can be justified by truth and fact. The proofs I have brought are from the antient Heathen writers themselves, and not from any Christian authors, except as far as they are supported by the former. Nor can I think there is any danger of what some good persons might possibly be apprehensive of, that this might tend to diminish the horror of vices, which are justly accounted most detestable and odious. The only inference that can justly be drawn from it is, that the bias of corrupt customs, and vicious appetites and passions, are apt to over-rule the moral sentiments of the human mind, and tend to stifle the remonstrances of conscience, and even to bribe reason to judge too favourably concerning practices which it would otherwise reject with



abhorrence. It also shews, that a Divine Revelation, and an express law of God, enforced by the strongest sanctions, may be of great use in point of morals, even with respect to the restraining men from those things, the evil and turpitude of which seem to be most apparent to reason and nature. Notwithstanding the corruptions that have prevailed among many who have taken upon them the name of Christians, and which some have taken pains to exaggerate, the most abominable vices have been far from being so general among them, as they were in those that have been esteemed the most refined nations of Paganism. It is not to be doubted, but that vast numbers of those who believe the Gospel have been and are preserved by the purity of its precepts, and the power of its sanctions, from vices to which otherwise they would have given a boundless indulgence. Nor can any who believe the Christian religion allow themselves in vicious practices, without sinning against the clearest light, and breaking through the strongest engagements. I do not see, therefore, how they can be accounted real friends to the purity of morals, who are for taking away or diminishing the force of those motives and sanctions which the Gospel proposes, and which, where they are really believed, tend both to animate good men to a holy and virtuous practice by the most glorious hopes and prospects, and to deter the wicked from their evil courses by the most amazing denunciations of God's righteous vengeance.

When we consider the strange fluctuations of persons of the greatest abilities in the Pagan world, with respect to several important points of religion and morality, and to the retributions of a future state, it ought surely to make us highly thankful that we have a written well-attested Revelation in our hands, to which we may have recourse, both for assisting us to form a right judgment in matters of the greatest consequence, and for regulating our practice. And it has pleased God in his great wisdom and goodness to es-



establish its divine authority by such an abundance and variety of proofs, as are every way suitable to the importance of the case, and are amply sufficient to engage though not to constrain the assent. Christianity is not afraid of the light, or of a free and impartial examination and inquiry. It has always met with the best reception from those who have examined it, in the integrity of their hearts, with that seriousness and attention which the great importance of it well deserves. Let us therefore, with minds freed as far as possible from vicious prejudices, consider the nature and excellency of the Christian religion, the spirituality and heavenliness of its doctrines, the discoveries that are there made to us of those things which it is of the highest concernment to us to know, especially relating to the wonderful methods of the Divine Wisdom and Grace for our redemption and salvation, the unquestionable excellency of its morals, and purity of its laws, the power of those motives by which the practice of them is enforced, and the admirable tendency of the whole to promote the glory of God, and the cause of righteousness, piety, and virtue in the world: let us then make proper reflections on the holy and spotless life, and most perfect and sublime character of the great Founder of our religion, and also on the character of his disciples, who published it to the world in his name: that they appear to have been persons of great probity and simplicity, incapable of carrying on an artful imposture, or of being themselves the inventors of that scheme of religion which they taught, and which was contrary in several instances to their own strongest prejudices; nor is there any thing in their whole temper and conduct, in the doctrine they preached, or in the manner of propagating it, that savours of the views of worldly policy, or that is cunningly accommodated to humour men's prejudices and vicious passions, and gratify their ambition and sensuality. But especially let us consider the illustrious attestations given from heaven to the divine mission, both of

the first Author and publishers of the Christian religion, by a series of the most wonderful works, done in express confirmation of the religion they taught, and which manifestly transcended all human power or skill, and bore the evident tokens of a divine interposition: and that the truth of these facts is ascertained to us with all the evidence that can be reasonably desired in such a case, and which, all things considered, is as great as could be expected concerning any facts whatsoever done in past ages. To all this may be added the evidence arising from clear and express prophecies, relating to events which no human sagacity could foresee, some of them undeniably delivered and committed to writing many ages before their accomplishment, and yet in due time punctually fulfilled. All these are of great force, even separately considered; but when viewed and taken together in their just connection and harmony, form such a chain of proofs, as carries a mighty force of conviction with it to an honest and unprejudiced mind, that is animated with a sincere love of truth. The advocates of Christianity have frequently urged these arguments with great clearness and strength; and whilst these proofs continue firm, and the original facts are well supported, the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion stand upon solid and immoveable foundations. Nor should we suffer prejudices arising from the ill conduct of many of its professors and teachers, or from some particular passages of Scripture hard to be understood, or the difficulty of comprehending some of its doctrines which relate to things of a very sublime and mysterious nature, at all shake our belief of true original Christianity. It is a rule laid down long since by Aristotle, and the justness of which has never been controverted, that we ought not to expect in all things the same kind of evidence, but in every thing content ourselves with such proofs as the nature of the subject will bear. To insist upon mathematical demonstration in matters of religion and morality,

is perfectly absurd and unreasonable; and yet the evidence may be such as is sufficient to produce a certainty, though of another kind, and which may very fully satisfy the mind, and make it reasonable for us to give our assent to it, notwithstanding some objections that may be made against it, and from which scarce any truth is entirely free.

I shall on this occasion consider a pretence that has been often made use of by men of sceptical minds, that without an absolute certainty (which they pretend is not to be had in what relates to religion) they may reasonably and safely withhold their assent. But such persons ought to consider that if there be a probability on the side of religion, though short of an absolute certainty, this would induce an obligation upon them to receive it, and to govern their temper and conduct by the rules it prescribes. Where a thing appears to be probable, i. e. that there is more reason for it than the contrary, this does not leave the mind in a perfect equilibrium, and at liberty absolutely to suspend its assent if it be a matter of speculation, or to abstain from acting if it be a matter of practice. This the Pyrrhonists, who carried scepticism to the greatest height, were sensible of, and therefore would not allow that any one thing is more probable than another; which seems to me to be one of the greatest extravagancies that any man pretending to reason can be guilty of; nor do I believe that any one man, whatever he might pretend in words, could really bring himself to think so. Those of what was called the New Academy, though at the bottom little better than sceptics, saw the absurdity of this, and therefore though they would not acknowledge a certainty, yet allowed a probability in things; and if they had pursued this concession to its genuine consequences, it would have subverted the scheme they had in view of a perpetual suspension of assent. It is an undeniable maxim, that we ought to follow evidence as far as it appears to us, and therefore that which is probable ought to sway our

judgment, and influence our practice, according to the measure of its probability, and the preponderancy of the reasons which are brought for it. It is manifest to every one that has any knowledge of mankind, that it is probability which governs our conduct, if we act prudently; and that the author of our beings designed it should be so. We are so constituted, that in almost all cases relating to practice, we are obliged to follow what appears to us upon a proper consideration of it to be most probable; and for any man wilfully to neglect a thing which would probably be of great advantage to him, or to do any thing which probably will expose him to great loss and damage, would be justly deemed a very foolish and unreasonable conduct, and in matters where duty is concerned a very guilty one. Some of those who were otherwise much addicted to scepticism in speculation, have yet acknowledged, that in the affairs of common life, people ought to follow probable appearances. And if this is to be done in what relates to our present temporal interest and advantage, why not in that which relates to our highest happiness? The more important any affair is, and the greater the danger is in neglecting it, or the damage to be sustained by such a neglect, the more we are obliged, by the soundest maxims of reason and good sense, to govern ourselves, and act according to what appears to us upon a diligent enquiry to be most probable. And what reason can be assigned, that we should not act so in matters of the greatest consequence, and in which our everlasting salvation appears to be nearly concerned? In cases of this nature, if the hazard be vastly greater on one side than on the other; all the rules of prudence lead us to take that part, which has the least hazard attending it, even though the evidence on that side should be supposed to be no greater, or perhaps something less, than on the other. But when both the evidence is



much stronger on one side, and at the same time the hazard men run by rejecting it much greater, to take that side which is both less probable and more dangerous, would be the most foolish and inexcusable conduct in the world.

If therefore, upon a fair enquiry, there is at least a great probability that the Christian Revelation came from God, it is both our wisdom and duty to embrace it, and to govern ourselves by its excellent rules. No man in that case would run a hazard by embracing the Gospel, or at least a hazard in any degree equal to what he would expose himself to by rejecting it: Let us suppose that by complying with the terms of salvation which are there proposed, he should deny himself some of those liberties which he would otherwise indulge, and controul his passions by the Christian rules, which do not require us to extirpate the passions and appetites, but to govern and keep them within the bounds of moderation and temperance, this is no more than the wisest men have advised as the properest way for securing a man's own tranquillity, and for preserving body and soul in a right temper. In other cases, men think it reasonable to hazard some present loss, and to undergo some present hardships and inconveniencies, on the probable prospect of avoiding a much greater evil, or procuring some valuable and superior advantage. But when the advantage proposed is so infinitely great as the rewards promised to good men in the Gospel, and the evils so great as the punishments there denounced against the obstinately impenitent and disobedient, it ought certainly to have proportionably a more powerful influence.

I hope every reader that brings with him a mind sincerely disposed to know the truth and follow it, will join with me in earnest supplications to God, who is a lover of truth and holiness, that he would be graciously pleased

to clear our minds from vicious prejudices, and dispel the clouds of ignorance and error, that we may receive the truth in the love of it, may behold it in its convincing light, and feel its transforming power, and may bring forth fruits suitable to it in a holy and virtuous life, to the glory of God, and our own eternal salvation.

# CONTENTS

## OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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### PART II.

#### CHAPTER I.

Man appears from the frame of his nature to be a moral agent, and designed to be governed by a law. Accordingly, God hath given him a law to be the rule of his duty. The scheme of those who pretend that this law is naturally and necessarily known to all men without instruction, contrary to fact and experience. Yet there are several ways by which men come to a knowledge of this law, and of the duty required of them; viz. by a moral sense implanted in the human heart; by a principle of reason judging from the natures and relations of things; by education, and human instruction: besides all which, God hath made discoveries of his will concerning our duty, in a way of extraordinary Divine Revelation.

Page 1.

#### CHAPTER II.

The principal heads of moral duty were made known to mankind from the beginning, and continued to be known and acknowledged in the patriarchal ages. When men fell from the right knowledge of God, they fell also in important instances from the right knowledge of moral duty. The law given to the people of Israel was designed to instruct and direct them in morals, as well as in the knowledge and worship of the one true God. A great deal was done in the methods of Divine Providence, to preserve the sense and knowledge of morals among the heathen nations; but they did not make a right use of the helps afforded them.

Page 18.

#### CHAPTER III.

A particular enquiry into the state of morality in the Heathen world. A complete rule of morals, taken in its just extent, comprehends the duties relating to God, our neighbours, and ourselves. If the Heathens had such a rule among

them, it would appear either in the precepts of their religion, or in the prescriptions of their civil laws, or customs which have the force of laws, or in the doctrines and instructions of their philosophers and moralists. It is proposed distinctly to consider each of these. As to what passed among them for religion, morality did not properly make any part of it, nor was it the office of their priests to teach men virtue. As to the civil laws and constitutions, supposing them to have been never so proper for civil government, they were not fitted to be an adequate rule of morals. The best of them were, in several respects, greatly defective. Various instances produced of civil laws, and of customs which had the force of laws, among the most civilized nations, especially among the antient Egyptians and Greeks, which were contrary to the rules of morality.

Page 33.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Farther instances of civil laws and customs among the Pagan nations. Those of the antient Romans considered. The laws of the twelve tables, though mightily extolled, were far from exhibiting a complete rule of morals. The law of Romulus concerning the exposing of diseased and deformed children. This continued to be practised among the Romans. Their cruel treatment of their slaves. Their gladiatory shows contrary to humanity. Unnatural lusts common among them as well as the Greeks. Observations on the Chinese laws and customs. Other laws and customs of nations mentioned, which are contrary to good morals.

Page 57.

#### CHAPTER V.

Concerning morality as taught by the antient Heathen philosophers. Some of them said excellent things concerning moral virtue, and their writings might in several respects be of great use. But they could not furnish a perfect rule of morals, that had sufficient certainty, clearness, and authority. No one philosopher, or sect of philosophers, can be absolutely depended upon as a proper guide in matters of morality. Nor is a complete system of morals to be extracted from the writings of them all collectively considered. The vanity of such an attempt shewn. Their sentiments, how excellent soever, could not properly pass for laws to mankind.

Page 72.

#### CHAPTER VI.

Many of the philosophers were fundamentally wrong in the first principles of morals. They denied that there are any moral differences of things founded in nature and reason, and resolved them wholly into human laws and customs. Observations on those philosophers who made man's chief good consist in pleasure, and proposed this as the highest end of morals, without any regard to a Divine Law. The moral system of Epicurus considered. His high pretences to virtue examined. The inconsistency of his principles shewn, and that, if



## CONTENTS.

xvii

pursued to their genuine consequences, they are really destructive of all virtue and good morals. Page 83.

### CHAPTER VII.

The sentiments of those who are accounted the best of the Pagan moral philosophers considered. They held in general, that the law is right reason. But reason alone, without a superior authority, does not lay an obliging force upon men. The wisest Heathens taught, that the original of law was from God, and that from him it derived its authority. As to the question, how this law comes to be known to us, they sometimes represent it as naturally known to all men. But the principal way of knowing it is resolved by them into the mind and reason of wise men, or, in other words, into the doctrines and instructions of the philosophers. The uncertainty of this rule of morals shewn. They talked highly of virtue in general, but differed about matters of great importance relating to the law of nature: some instances of which are mentioned. Page 107.

### CHAPTER VIII.

Epictetus's observation concerning the difficulty of applying general preconceptions to particular cases, verified in the antient philosophers. They were generally wrong with respect to the duty and worship proper to be rendered to God, though they themselves acknowledged it to be a point of the highest importance. As to social duties, some eminent philosophers pleaded for revenge and against forgiveness of injuries. But especially they were deficient in that part of moral duty which relates to the government of the sensual appetites and passions. Many of the philosophers countenanced by their principles and practice the most unnatural lusts and vices. Those of them that did not carry it so far, yet encouraged an impurity inconsistent with the strictness and dignity of virtue. Plato very culpable in this respect, so also were the Cynics and Stoics. Simple fornication generally allowed amongst them. Our modern deists very loose in their principles with regard to sensual impurities. Page 119.

### CHAPTER IX.

The Stoics the most eminent teachers of morals in the Pagan world. Mightily admired and extolled both by the antients and moderns. Observations on the Stoical maxims and precepts with regard to piety towards God. Their scheme tended to take away, or very much weaken, the fear of God as a punisher of sin. It tended also to raise men to a state of self-sufficiency and independency, inconsistent with a due veneration for the Supreme Being. Extravagant strains of pride and arrogance in some of the principal Stoics. Confession of sin in their addresses to the Deity made no part of their religion. Page 145.

## CHAPTER X.

The Stoics gave excellent precepts with regard to the duties men owe to one another. Yet they carried their doctrine of apathy so far, as to be in some instances not properly consistent with a humane disposition and a charitable sympathy. They said fine things concerning forgiving injuries and bearing with other men's faults. But in several respects they carried this to an extreme, and placed it on wrong foundations, or enforced it by improper motives. This is particularly shewn with regard to those two eminent philosophers Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus. The most antient Stoics did not allow pardoning mercy to be an ingredient in a perfect character. Page 167.

## CHAPTER XI.

The Stoical precepts with regard to self-government considered. They talk in high strains of regulating and subduing the appetites and passions; and yet gave too great indulgence to the fleshly concupiscence, and had not a due regard to purity and chastity. Their doctrine of suicide considered. Some of the most eminent wise men among the Heathens, and many of our modern admirers of natural religion, faulty in this respect. The falsehood and pernicious consequences of this doctrine shewn. Page 187.

## CHAPTER XII.

The Stoics professed to lead men to perfect happiness in this present life, abstracting from all consideration of a future state. Their scheme of the absolute sufficiency of virtue to happiness, and the indifferency of all external things considered. They were sometimes obliged to make concessions which were not very consistent with their system. Their philosophy in its rigour not reducible to practice, and had little influence either on the people or on themselves. They did not give a clear idea of the nature of that virtue which they so highly extolled. The loose doctrine of many of the Stoics, as well as other philosophers, with regard to truth and lying. Page 208.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The nations were sunk into a deplorable state of corruption, with regard to morals, at the time of our Saviour's appearing. To recover them from their wretched and guilty state to holiness and happiness, one principal end for which God sent his Son into the world. The Gospel Dispensation opened with a free offer of pardon and salvation to perishing sinners, upon their returning to God by faith and repentance, and new obedience: at the same time the best directions and assistances were given to engage them to a holy and virtuous practice. The Gospel scheme of morality exceeds whatsoever had been published to the world before. A summary representation of the excellency of the Gospel precepts with regard to the duties we owe to God, our neigh-

bours, and ourselves. These precepts enforced by the most powerful and important motives. The tendency of the Gospel to promote the practice of holiness and virtue, an argument to prove the Divinity of the Christian Revelation.

Page 230.

## PART III.

### CHAPTER I.

The importance of the doctrine of a future state. It is agreeable to right reason. The natural and moral arguments for a future state of great weight. Yet not so evident, but that if men were left merely to their own unassisted reason, they would be apt to labour under great doubt and difficulties. A Revelation from God concerning it would be of great advantage.

Page 266.

### CHAPTER II.

Some notions of the immortality of the soul and a future state obtained among mankind from the most antient times, and spread very generally through the nations. This was not originally the effect of human reason and philosophy, nor was it merely the invention of legislators for political purposes: but was derived to them by a most antient tradition from the earliest ages, and was probably a part of the primitive religion communicated by Divine Revelation to the first of the human race.

Page 272.

### CHAPTER III.

The antient traditions concerning the immortality of the soul and a future state became in process of time greatly obscured and corrupted. It was absolutely denied by many of the philosophers, and rejected as a vulgar error. Others represented it as altogether uncertain, and having no solid foundation to support it. The various and contradictory sentiments of the philosophers concerning the nature of the human soul. Many of the Peripatetics denied the subsistence of the soul after death, and this seems to have been Aristotle's own opinion. The Stoics had no settled or consistent scheme on this head: nor was the doctrine of the immortality of the soul a doctrine of their school. A future state not acknowledged by the celebrated Chinese philosopher Confucius, nor by the sect of the learned who profess to be his disciples.

Page 283.

### CHAPTER IV.

Concerning the philosophers who professed to believe and teach the immortality of the soul. Of these Pythagoras is generally esteemed one of the most eminent. His doctrine on this head shewn to be not well consistent with a state of future rewards and punishments. Socrates believed the immortality of the soul, and a future state, and argued for it. In this he was followed by Plato. The

Doctrine of Cicero with regard to the immortality of the soul considered. As also that of Plutarch. Page 301.

#### CHAPTER V.

Those of the antient philosophers who argued for the immortality of the soul, placed it on wrong foundations, and mixed things with it which weakened the belief of it. Some of them asserted, that the soul is immortal, as being a portion of the Divine Essence. They universally held the pre-existence of the human soul, and laid the chief stress upon this for proving its immortality. Their doctrine of the transmigration of souls was a great corruption of the true doctrine of a future state. Those who said the highest things of future happiness, considered it as confined chiefly to persons of eminence, or to those of philosophical minds, and afforded small encouragement to the common kind of pious and virtuous persons. The rewards of Elysium were but temporary, and of a short duration: and even the happiness of those privileged souls, who were supposed to be admitted not merely into Elysium, but into heaven, was not everlasting in the strict and proper sense. The Gospel doctrine of eternal life to all good and righteous persons was not taught by the antient Pagan philosophers. Page 324.

#### CHAPTER VI.

Those that seemed to be the most strenuous advocates for the immortality of the soul and a future state among the antients, did not pretend to any certainty concerning it. The uncertainty they were under appears from their way of managing their consolatory discourses on the death of their friends. To this also it was owing, that in their exhortations to virtue they laid little stress on the rewards of a future state. Their not having a certainty concerning a future state, put them upon schemes to supply the want of it. Hence they insisted upon the self-sufficiency of virtue for complete happiness without a future recompence: and asserted, that a short happiness is as good as an eternal one. Page 343.

#### CHAPTER VII.

A state of future rewards necessarily connotes future punishments. The belief of the former without the latter might be of pernicious consequence. The antient philosophers and legislators were sensible of the importance and necessity of the doctrine of future punishments. Yet they generally rejected and discarded them as vain and superstitious terrors. The maxim universally held by the philosophers, that the gods are never angry, and can do no hurt, considered. Page 363.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

The generality of the people, especially in the politer nations of Greece and Rome, had fallen in a great measure from the belief of a future state before the



## CONTENTS.

xxi

time of our Saviour's appearing. This is particularly shewn concerning the Greeks, by the testimonies of Socrates and Polybius. The same thing appears with regard to the Romans. Future punishments were disregarded and ridiculed even among the vulgar, who in this fell from the religion of their ancestors. The resurrection of the body rejected by the philosophers of Greece and Rome.

Page 381.

### CHAPTER IX.

Our Lord Jesus Christ brought life and immortality into the most clear and open light by the Gospel. He both gave the fullest assurance of that everlasting happiness which is prepared for good men in a future state, and made the most inviting discoveries of the nature and greatness of that happiness. The Gospel also contains express declarations concerning the punishment which shall be inflicted upon the wicked in a future state. The necessity and importance of this part of the Gospel Revelation shewn. The Conclusion, with some general reflections upon the whole.

Page 399.



THE  
ADVANTAGE AND NECESSITY  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN REVELATION,  
SHEWN FROM THE  
STATE OF RELIGION  
IN THE  
*ANTIEN<sup>T</sup> HEATHEN WORLD.*

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PART II.

RELATING TO A RULE OF MORAL DUTY.

CHAPTER I.

Man appears from the frame of his nature to be a moral-agent, and designed to be governed by a law. Accordingly, God hath given him a law to be the rule of his duty. The scheme of those who pretend that this law is naturally and necessarily known to all men without instruction, contrary to fact and experience. Yet there are several ways by which men come to a knowledge of this law, and of the duty required of them; viz. by a moral sense implanted in the human heart; by a principle of reason judging from the natures and relations of things; by education, and human instruction: besides all which, God hath made discoveries of his will concerning our duty, in a way of extraordinary Divine Revelation.

HAVING considered the state of the antient Heathen Nations, with respect to the knowledge and worship of the one true God, and shewn the need they stood in of an extraordinary Divine Revelation, to recover them from that amazing ignorance of God, and that idolatry and polytheism, into which they were fallen; I now proceed to the next

thing I proposed, which was to consider the state of the antient Heathen world with regard to a rule of moral duty.

That it is of great importance to mankind to have clear directions given them concerning moral duty in its just extent, and to have it enforced upon them by a sufficient authority, and by proper arguments and motives, is evident to a considering mind. And many have been of opinion, that this is so manifest and obvious to natural reason, that there is no need of Divine Revelation, either to teach men their duty, or to enforce upon them moral obligations. This seems to have a plausible appearance, if we consider the matter abstractly, and in a way of speculation. But the surest way of judging of it is from fact and experience: for if it appears that in fact the most knowing and civilized nations in the heathen world, and the wisest and ablest men among them, have laboured under great uncertainties, and even fallen into dangerous errors with regard to several important branches of moral duty; and that they have also been greatly deficient in the proposing such motives, as might be most proper and efficacious for enforcing the practice of it; this affordeth a strong presumption of the weakness of human reason in this respect, when left merely to itself in the present state of mankind: and that an express Revelation from God, both for instructing us in moral duty in its just extent, and enforcing it upon us by the most powerful motives, would be of the greatest advantage to mankind.

To prepare our way for a due consideration of this subject, it will be proper, in the first place, to offer some general observations concerning man as a moral agent, and concerning the several ways by which he may be supposed to come to the knowledge of his duty.

That man is a moral agent, the proper subject of moral government, is as evident as that he is a reasonable creature, or that he is capable of virtue and vice, praise and



blame. And whatever some persons may dispute in a way of speculation, moral or free agency, though it may be difficult to settle the precise metaphysical notion of it, or to answer all the objections which subtil and sceptical men may form against it, is what all men are intimately conscious of. The self-approving and self-condemning reflections of a man's own mind plainly shew it to be so. God hath not only given man a body, and animal powers and instincts, suited to the uses and enjoyments of the animal and sensitive life, but he hath made him capable of discerning the moral differences of things, and hath given him a sense of good and evil, right and wrong, a self-determining and a self-reflecting power, whereby he is capable of chusing and acting for himself, and of passing a judgment on his own actions. There are few, but have had experience of an inward self-approbation or disapprobation, arising from the workings of a conscious principle within, according as they have been sensible of their having performed their duty or the contrary. And God's having made them creatures of such a kind, i. e. reasonable and moral agents, capable of a sense of moral obligation, is a demonstrative proof, that he designed them to be governed in that way, in which it is fit for moral agents to be governed; i. e. by giving them laws to be the rule of their duty. And if God hath given men laws, it must be his will that those laws should be obeyed; and as a wise and righteous moral Governor, he will deal with them agreeably to the laws which he hath given them, and will reward or punish them according to their obedience or disobedience to those laws.

But since no law is obligatory, except it be promulgated, and in some way published to those who are to be governed by it, we may reasonably conclude, that if God hath given a law to mankind, which they are obliged to obey, he hath not left them under an invincible ignorance of that law, but hath made such discoveries of it to them, that if it be not

their own fault, they may know what that duty is which God requireth of them, as far as it is necessary for them to do so.

Some have carried this so far as to assert, that all men have a natural knowledge of the whole of their duty by an intimate conscious perception, and an inward universal light, independent of all outward teaching. To this they apply the passage of Lucan,

“ ——— nec vocibus ullis  
Numen eget, dixitque semel nascentibus auctor  
Quicquid scire licet.”

As if God dictated to all men from their very birth, the whole of what is necessary for them to know with regard to their duty, so that they stand not in need of any farther vocal or verbal instruction. This seems to have been Lord Herbert's scheme, and is that of Dr. Tindal, in his famous book, intituled, “Christianity as old as the Creation.” Lord Bolingbroke frequently expresses himself to the same purpose. He says, that “natural Revelation (as he calls it) produces a series of intuitive knowledge from the first principles to the last conclusions (a).” Where he supposes, that both the first principles of the law of nature, and all the conclusions drawn from them, are intuitively and infallibly known to every man. Accordingly he declares, that “it is a perpetual standing Revelation always made, always making, to all the sons of Adam,” and affirms, that “it is intelligible at all times and all places alike, and proportioned to the meanest understanding (b).” Or, as he elsewhere has it, “The tables of the natural law are so obvious to the sight of all men, that no man who is able to read the plain-

(a) Bolingbroke's Works, vol. IV. p. 276. edit. 4to.

(b) Ibid. p. 92. 94. 96, 97.

est characters can mistake them (c).” According to this scheme, there is not the least need of any extraordinary external Revelation. And it would equally prove, that all the endeavours of philosophers, moralists, and legislators, to instruct mankind in matters of morality, were perfectly needless and superfluous. I have already offered some considerations to shew the absurdity of this scheme (d): and the following treatise will contain the fullest confutation of it; by which it will appear how prone mankind have always been to mistake the law of nature, in very important instances of moral duty. It is indeed so contrary to the experience and observations of all ages, that one would be apt to wonder that any men of sense should insist upon it: and yet the same pretence is still repeated by the enemies of Revelation. And some others of a different character have expressed themselves very inaccurately and unwarily on this subject.

But though this pretence of the universal clearness of the law of nature to all mankind, independent of all farther instruction, cannot be admitted, as being contrary to the most evident fact and experience, yet it must be acknowledged, that a great deal hath been done in the course and order of Divine Providence, to lead men into the knowledge of the duty required of them.

And 1. There is a moral sense implanted in the human mind, which, if duly cultivated and improved, might be of great use for leading men, in many instances, to the notion and practice of moral duty. I know this is a point that has been contested, and I shall not here enter into the debate. But it seems to me, that something of this kind, by what-

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(c) Bolingbroke's Works, vol. V. p. 153.

(d) See the first volume of this Work, Preliminary Discourse, p. 9, 10.



soever name it is called, must be admitted. Whosoever carefully examines his own heart, will be apt to think that there are moral feelings, distinct from mere reasoning, which incline him to certain ways of acting; and that the mind of man is so constituted, as to have an inward sense of moral beauty or deformity in affections and actions, which, when the human nature is in its right state, carries him to delight and take a complacency in some actions as right and fit, beautiful and lovely, and to dislike and disapprove the contrary. Some traces of this are to be found in the human mind, even in its most degenerate state, and which can scarce ever be utterly erased. As there are natural instincts distinct from reason, which tend to the preservation and convenience of the animal and vital frame, so there seem to be instincts of a moral kind, or propensions and inclinations, which, when duly regulated and improved, are of considerable use for leading men to a proper course of action. Such are the social and kind affections, so natural to the human heart, that they have obtained the name of humanity, and which shew that men were born not merely for themselves, but were designed by the author of their beings for mutual assistance, and the offices of benevolence.

But then, for preventing mistakes in this matter, there are several things proper to be here observed. One is, that this moral sense is not of equal strength and force in all men. It is most conspicuous and eminent in some noble and generous minds, in which a kind of natural propensity to justice, benevolence, gratitude, &c. remarkably appears, and powerfully operates: and in others it is so weak, as scarce to be perceived, or is overpowered by vicious habits and corrupt affections and appetites. It must be acknowledged on the one hand, that the moral sense is capable of being improved and strengthened by reason and reflection: and that on the other hand, it may be greatly perverted and de-



praved by vicious customs, inordinate lusts, and selfish interests, by false judgments of things, and evil examples. And I think it cannot be denied, that it is so much weakened in the present state of the human nature, that it is no way fit to be alone a sufficient guide in morals, but standeth in great need of farther direction and assistance. Some have carried their notions of the extent and efficacy of this moral sense beyond what reason and experience will warrant. The ingenious and polite Earl of Shaftesbury, after having observed, that there is a natural beauty of actions as well as figures, adds, that "no sooner are actions viewed, no sooner the human affections and passions discerned (and they are most of them discerned as soon as felt) than straight an inward eye distinguishes, and sees the fair and shapely, the amiable and admirable, apart from the deformed, the foul, the odious, and despicable." This is elegantly expressed: but I should think, that any one who impartially considers human nature, as it appears in the generality of mankind, must own that the inward eye, the eye of the mind, is now very much vitiated and obscured, and that there are many things which hinder its just discernment. The experience of all ages shews, that men have been generally apt to mistake idolatry and superstition, than which nothing in the opinion of this noble author can be more odious and despicable, for the most amiable thing in the world, true religion and piety. And even with respect to the duties men owe to one another, and the government of their own affections and passions, how often have they been mistaken in their notions of the fair, the amiable, and admirable, apart from the foul and deformed, the odious and despicable? The custom of exposing weak and helpless children, which, one should think, is contrary to the most intimate feelings of humanity, obtained very generally among the most civilized nations; and yet they do not appear to have been sensible that in this they acted a wrong and inhuman part, but rather

looked upon it to be a prudent and justifiable practice. The various tribes of American savages, whom some have recommended as following the genuine dictates of nature, are so far from feeling any remorse for the most cruel instances of revenge on their enemies, or those who, they think, have injured them, that they rejoice and glory in them as the noblest exploits, and both applaud themselves, and are applauded by others, on the account of them. Many other instances of the like kind might be mentioned, some of which I shall have occasion to take notice of in the course of this work. It is not therefore a rule to be depended on, which some have laid down, that no man can violate the law of nature without condemning himself. The pleasure or remorse men feel in their reflections on their own actions, is far from being a sure mark and criterion of the moral goodness or evil of an action in the present state of mankind. It is true, that the mind is naturally carried to approve what it takes to be right and fit, and praise-worthy, and to disapprove and condemn what it takes to be base and wrong; but then, in many instances, it stands in need of direction and instruction as to what is right and wrong. And when it is well informed, then it is that it is fitly qualified to approve and condemn in the proper place. It appears, therefore, that what is called the moral sense was not designed to be an adequate guide in morals; nor is it alone considered, and left merely to itself, fit to have the supreme direction as to the moral conduct. It never was intended to preclude the necessity of instruction, but to be an assistant to our reason, to incline the mind more readily to its duty, and produce a complacency in it; and to create a dislike and abhorrence of that which is evil and base, and to restrain us from committing it.

This leads me to observe,

2dly, That there is in man a principle of reason, which

is designed to preside over the propensions and affections, and to direct the moral temper and conduct. Man has an understanding given him, by which he is capable of enquiring into the natures and relations of things, and considering what those relations require. And whatsoever clearly appeareth from the very nature and relations of things to be fit and right for reasonable creatures to perform, we may justly conclude, that it is the will of God who constituted that nature and those relations they should perform; and when once it is considered as the will of God, the supreme universal Lord and moral governor, then it is regarded not merely as fit and reasonable in itself, but as a divine law, in the strictest and properest sense.

This way of discovering our duty by searching into the nature and relations of things, when rightly performed, is of great extent. It signifies, that we must form just and worthy notions of God, and of his glorious attributes and perfections, and the relations between him and us: that we must know ourselves, and the frame and constitution of our own natures, as also the relations we stand in towards our fellow-creatures: that we must carefully consider and compare all these, and the fitnesses and obligations arising from them; and thence collect our duty towards God, our neighbours, and ourselves. There are many who represent this not only as the surest way of coming to the right knowledge of the duty which God requireth of us, but as easy and obvious to all mankind. Lord Bolingbroke frequently talks, as if every man was able in this way to form a complete system of Religion and Morals for himself, without the least difficulty. He says, that “we more certainly know the will of God in this way, than we can know it in any other:”

and, "that it admits of no doubt(*e*).” And that, “by employing our reason to collect the will of God from the fund of our nature physical and moral, and by contemplating frequently and seriously the laws that are plainly and necessarily deducible from them, we may acquire not only a particular knowledge of those laws, but a general, and in short an habitual knowledge of the manner in which God is pleased to exercise his supreme power in this system, beyond which we have no concern(*f*).” I readily own, that this searching into the relations and constitution of things, when carried on in a proper manner, may be of great use for coming at the knowledge of the law of nature, and for shewing, that the main principles of moral duty are founded in the nature of things, and are what right reason, duly exercised, will approve, when fairly explained and set in a proper light. But certainly this is not the ordinary way for the bulk of mankind to come to the knowledge of their duty. There are few who have leisure or capacity, or inclination for profound enquiries into the natures and reasons of things, and for drawing proper conclusions from them concerning the will of God. That which the ingenious and noble author now now mentioned seems to lay the principal stress upon, viz. the employing our reason to collect the will of God from the fund of our nature physical and moral, is far from being so easy a task as he represents it. The knowledge of the human constitution, taken in a physical and moral view, includes a knowledge of body and soul in man, of the distinction between them, and the union of both, from whence duties result relating to the welfare of the whole compound: it takes in the knowledge of our appetites and passions, our

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(*e*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. IV. p. 287. and Vol. V. p. 196. edit. 4to.

(*f*) Ibid. Vol. V. p. 100. See also p. 154. 178. 196. 271.



affections and instincts, and of our rational and moral powers, that by comparing all these, we may know wherein consisteth the proper order and harmony of our natures, what are the just limits of our appetites and passions, how far they are to be gratified, and how far to be restrained. And can it be pretended, that every particular person, if left merely to himself, is able, without assistance or instruction, to consider and compare all these, and to deduce from them a complete system of laws for his own conduct? The rule which a noted author has laid down as sufficient for the direction of mankind is this, that "they are so to regulate their appetites, as will conduce to the exercise of their reason, the health of their bodies, and the pleasure of their senses, taken and considered together, since therein their happiness consists (*g*)."

But if this be all the law that any man has to govern him in this matter, it is to be feared, that the bias of his appetites and passions, and the pleasures of his senses, would generally bring over his reason to judge in their own favour. Lord Bolingbroke, who, in the passage cited above, supposes that all men may easily collect the will of God from the fund of their own nature physical and moral, gives this account of the human system: that "man has two principles of determination, affections and passions excited by apparent good, and reason, which is a sluggard, and cannot be so excited. Reason must be willed into action: and as this can rarely happen, when the will is already determined by affections and passions; so when it does happen, a sort of composition generally happens between the two principles: and if the affections and passions cannot govern absolutely, they obtain more indulgence from reason than they deserve, or than she would shew if she were entirely free from their force (*h*)."

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(*g*) Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 14.

(*h*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 150. See also *ibid.* p. 116. 137. 227.

he expressly affirms, that "the appetites, passions, and immediate objects of pleasure, will always be of greater force to determine us than reason (i)." This, indeed, is too universally expressed. It is not true, that the appetites and passions, and immediate objects of pleasure, will always be of greater force to determine us than reason. Many instances there have been of excellent persons, in whom reason has been of greater prevalence to determine them, than the passions or present sensual pleasure. But it cannot be denied, that, in the present state of mankind, the case is generally as his Lordship represents it: and that, as he elsewhere speaks, "amidst the contingencies that must arise from the constitution of every individual, the odds will be on the side of appetite (k)." To set up every man therefore for his own legislator, as if he were fit to be left to form a system of law and duty for himself, without any farther instructions, is a romantic scheme, and would tend to introduce a general confusion and licentiousness, to the subversion of all good order and morality. As to the duties we owe to God, it sufficiently appears, from what was observed in the former part of this work, how little mankind are qualified, if left to themselves without instruction, to form a right judgment concerning them. And with respect to that part of our duty which relates to the government of our own appetites and passions, it will be easily acknowledged, that the bulk of mankind are not fit to be left to indulge them, as far as they themselves think reasonable. If every man was to judge of his duty by what, in his opinion, tends most to his own happiness in the circumstances he is in (which is the rule laid down by those who make the highest pretences to the Law and Religion

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(i) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 267, 268.

(k) Ibid. p. 479.

of Nature (1) in opposition to Revelation) it would soon bring in a very loose morality: since there is nothing in which men are more apt to deceive themselves, and to form false judgments, than in what relates to their proper happiness. And even as to that part of morals which relates to our duty towards mankind, and which includes the exercise of justice, fidelity, benevolence, charity, and the various offices of the social life, though there seem to be strong traces of it in the human mind, and it is what right reason must approve as agreeable to the relations we bear to one another, yet I believe it will be granted, that it would not be very proper to leave every man merely to himself, to fix the measures of just and unjust, of right and wrong, in his dealings and transactions with other men. He would be often apt to judge by false weights and measures, and would be in great danger of being led aside by his passions and selfish affections and interests, which, it is to be feared, would frequently bribe his reason to form wrong and partial judgments of things. No human government could be safe upon this plan, if every man were to be left absolutely to his own direction, without any other guide. All the laws enacted by states and commonwealths, and all books of morality, written by the wisest men in all ages, proceed upon this supposition, that men stand in need of instruction and assistance, in order to the right forming and regulating their moral conduct.

Accordingly, I would observe,

3dly, That another way by which men come to the knowledge of moral duty, is by the instructions of others. This seems to be manifestly intended by the Author of

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(1) Dr. Tindal, Morgan and others.



our beings. We come into the world in an infant state: we receive our first ideas of things, the first rudiments of knowledge, from our parents, and those about us: and the notions which are instilled into our minds in our early years, often make a deep and lasting impression, and have no small influence upon our after-conduct. It is therefore one of the principal duties of parents to endeavour to train up their children betimes to worthy sentiments. Thus we find that, in the Jewish law, it is the express command of God, frequently urged by the highest authority, that parents should take great and assiduous care to instruct their children in the statutes and precepts which God had given them, and in the duties there required. It is mentioned to the praise of that excellent person Abraham, that he commanded his children "and household after him to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment (*m*)."<sup>(m)</sup> The wisest men in all ages have been sensible of the great advantage of a good education (*n*), and that men are not to be left merely to follow the dictates of rude, undisciplined, and uninstructed nature. As to matter of fact, it can scarce be denied, that no small part of the notions men have of right and wrong, and of what is blameable and praiseworthy, comes by education and custom, by tradition and instruction. And the vulgar almost every where adopt that scheme of religion and morals, which prevails in their respective countries. That great statesman and moralist Puffendorf, who was remarkable for his knowledge of the law of nature and of mankind, ascribes "the facility which children and ignorant people have in determining between just and unjust, right and wrong, to the habitude which

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(*m*) Gen. xviii. 19.

(*u*) See the Preliminary Discourse, in the first volume of this Work, p. 10.



they have insensibly contracted from their cradles, or from the time they first began to make use of their reason; by observing the good approved, and the evil disapproved, the one commended and the other punished: and that it is owing to the ordinary practice of the principal maxims of natural law in the events of common life, that there are few people who have any doubt whether these things might not be otherwise (o).” And Mr. Barbeyrac, in his notes upon it, after having observed that “there is a manifest proportion between the maxims of natural law, and the dictates of right reason; so that it is perceived by the most simple people from the moment they are proposed to them, and that they attend and examine them;” adds, that “perhaps they could never have discovered them of themselves, and cannot always comprehend the reasons of them, or distinctly explain what they perceive concerning them; and that though no man who is arrived at the age of discretion can reasonably pretend to excuse himself as to this matter by invincible ignorance, yet it is nevertheless true, that education, instruction, and example, are the ordinary canals by which these ideas enter into the minds of men: without this, the greater part of mankind would either almost entirely extinguish their natural light, or would never give the least attention to them. Experience shews this but too plainly. Many things there are among savage people, and even among the most civilized nations, sufficient to justify this melancholy and mortifying truth. From whence (saith he) it ought to be concluded, that every man should use his best endeavours to contribute, as far as is in his power, to instruct others in their duty, to establish, strengthen, and

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(o) De Jur. Nat. et Gent. lib. ii. chap. 3. sect. 13.

propagate so useful a knowledge (*p*).” This is certainly one considerable instance in which the Author of our beings intended that men should be helpful to one another, in proportion to their abilities and opportunities. But it is, in a particular manner, incumbent upon parents, masters of families, legislators and magistrates, the ministers of religion, and those who profess to instruct men in the science of morals. And such instructions properly given are, no doubt, of great advantage, and what we ought to be very thankful for. But it is manifest from experience, that merely human instruction cannot be absolutely depended upon: and that men have been often led into wrong notions of morality, in very important instances, by those who ought to have instructed them better.

I would therefore observe farther, that besides the several ways which have been mentioned, whereby men come to the knowledge of moral duty, there is great need of a Divine Revelation, in order to the setting their duty before them in its just extent, and enforcing it upon them by the highest authority. It cannot reasonably be denied, that God can, if he thinks fit, make discoveries of his will to mankind, in a way of extraordinary Revelation (*q*); and it is manifest, that if he should please to do so, such a Divine Revelation, confirmed by sufficient evidence, and prescribing in his name the particulars of our duty in plain and express precepts, would be of great use, and would come with much greater weight and force, than merely human laws, or the reasonings of philosophers and mo-

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(*p*) See Barbeyrac’s Puffendorf, tom. I. p. 217. not. 7. edit. Amst.

(*q*) See concerning this in the Preliminary Discourse prefixed to the former volume, p. 20, et seq.

ralists: and this method also hath God taken in his dealings with mankind; which is a convincing proof of his goodness, and the care he hath exercised towards them, in order to the leading men to the right knowledge and practice of their duty.

## CHAPTER II.

The principal heads of moral duty were made known to mankind from the beginning, and continued to be known and acknowledged in the patriarchal ages. When men fell from the right knowledge of God, they fell also in important instances from the right knowledge of moral duty. The law given to the people of Israel was designed to instruct and direct them in morals, as well as in the knowledge and worship of the one true God. A great deal was done in the methods of Divine Providence, to preserve the sense and knowledge of morals among the heathen nations; but they did not make a right use of the helps afforded them.

IT has been shewn, in the former part of this work, that as the first man was formed in an adult state, and placed in a world ready prepared, and amply provided for his reception and entertainment, so there is great reason to think, that God communicated to him the knowledge of religion, in its main fundamental articles, especially relating to the existence and perfections of the Deity, and the creation of the world, that he might be in an immediate capacity of serving his Maker, and answering the great end of his being. And one of the first and most natural enquiries, when he was made acquainted with the existence of a God of infinite perfections, his Creator and Sovereign Lord, must have been what God would have him to do, and what was the duty required of him, in order to secure the Divine Favour and Approbation. For it cannot reasonably be supposed, that he was left absolutely to himself, and to his own will, to act as he thought fit, without any higher direction or law to govern him. He could have no human instructor to teach, or to advise him: he had no parents or progenitors, whose knowledge and experience might have been of use to him: and as he had no experience of his own, it is not probable that, in his circum-



stances, he was left to frame a rule of duty for himself, and to find out the will of God by profound disquisitions into the nature and relations of things. We may therefore justly suppose, that a wise and good God, who designed him to be governed by a law, gave him a law by which he should be governed, and communicated his will to him in relation to the duty required of him. And that this was actually the case in fact, may be concluded from the short account given us by Moses of the primæval state of man. From that account it appears, that man was not left at his first formation merely to acquire ideas in the ordinary way, which would have been too tedious and slow as he was circumstanced, but was at once furnished with the knowledge that was then necessary for him. He was immediately endued with the gift of language, which necessarily supposes that he was furnished with a stock of ideas; a specimen of which he gave in giving names to the inferior animals, which were brought before him for that purpose. The same gift of language was imparted to the consort provided for him; and they both were admitted in several instances to a near intercourse with their Maker, and were immediately favoured with notions of several things which it concerned them to know. It pleased God to acquaint them with the dominion he had invested them with over the several creatures in this lower world: they had a divine allowance and directions as to the food it was proper for them to eat: they were instructed that they were to be the parents of a numerous offspring, and that they were to replenish the earth. The institution and law of marriage, which was given them, shews that they were made acquainted with the duties of the conjugal relation; with which are nearly connected the duties required of them as parents towards the children which should proceed from them, and the duties which their children should render to them, and to one another. As God gave them the law of

the Sabbath, we may well conclude that he directed them as to the proper way of sanctifying it by worshipping him the great Creator and Lord of the universe, and celebrating his glory as shining forth in the creation of the world, of which the Sabbath was designed to keep up a religious remembrance. The precept and injunction which was laid upon them not to eat the forbidden fruit, comprehended a considerable part of the moral law under it. It was designed to instruct them that they were not the absolute Lords of this lower world, but were under the dominion of an higher Lord, to whom they owed the most entire subjection, and unreserved obedience, in an implicit resignation to his supreme wisdom and goodness: that they were bound to exercise a government over their appetites and inclinations, and not to place their highest happiness in the gratification of them; and that they were not only to govern their bodily appetites, but to guard against an inordinate ambition, and to restrain their desires of knowledge within just bounds, without prying with an unwarrantable curiosity into things which God thought fit to conceal from them. Upon the whole, we may justly conclude, that the first parents of the human race had the knowledge of God, and of the main articles of their duty divinely communicated to them, as far as was proper, and suited to the state and circumstances they were in (*r*).

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(*r*) Puffendorf, who must be acknowledged to be a very able judge in what relates to the law of nature, declares, in a passage I cited before, that "it is very probable, that God taught the first men the chief heads of natural law, which were afterwards preserved and spread among their descendants by means of education and custom." He adds, that this does not hinder, but that the knowledge of them may be called natural, inasmuch as the truth and certainty of them may be discovered in a way of reasoning.

After the fall and disobedience of our first parents, new duties arose suited to the alteration of their circumstances. They were now to regard God as their offended Sovereign and Lord: discoveries were made to them both of his justice and righteous displeasure against sin, and of his placableness towards penitent sinners, and his pardoning mercy; without an assurance of which they might have sunk under those desponding fears which a consciousness of their guilt was apt to inspire. Repentance towards God, a submission to his justice in the punishment inflicted upon them for their disobedience, hope in his mercy, and a reliance on the promise he was graciously pleased to make to them, a fear of offending him for the future, and a desire of approving themselves to him by a new and dutiful obedience; these were dispositions which it was the will of God they should exercise. And as they stood in great need of a divine direction in those circumstances, it is reasonable to think that he signified his will to them in relation to their future conduct, and the religion required of fallen creatures. The history which Moses has given of the antediluvian world is very short: but in the account given of Cain and Abel it is plainly intimated, that there was in those early ages an intercourse between God and man, that he did not leave them without discoveries of his will, that a law had been given them with relation to the external worship of God, and particularly concerning the offering of sacrifice. Accordingly they both observed it as an act of religion; but Abel, who was a better man, with a more pious disposition than Cain. He is said, by the sacred writer to the He-

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Grotius also gives it as his opinion, that the law was originally promulgated to Adam, the father of mankind, and through him to the human race; and again to Noah, the second father of mankind, and by him transmitted to his descendants.



brews, to have offered sacrifice by faith, which seems plainly to refer to a divine institution and appointment; and that he well knew it was a rite which God required, and would accept. And its having spread so universally, among all nations from the most antient times, can scarce be accounted for but by supposing it to have been a part of Religion transmitted from the first ages to the whole race of mankind (*s*). What was said to Cain, and the curse inflicted upon him, supposed a divine law obliging to mutual love and benevolence, and of which the violence committed on his brother was a manifest breach. There were in the old world preachers of righteousness, who, we have reason to think, declared the will and law of God to men, and urged it upon them in his name, and by his authority. So Noah is called, 2 Pet. ii. 5. and such was that excellent person Enoch, and probably several others. To which it may be added, that if God had not made express discoveries of his will to men, and given them laws bound upon them by his own Divine Authority, their guilt would not have been so highly aggravated as to draw down upon them so dreadful a ruin and condemnation. But they sinned presumptuously, and with a high hand: they allowed themselves in an unrestrained indulgence of their lusts and appetites, and committed all sorts of violence, rapine, and wickedness, in the most manifest opposition to the divine law. They seem to have fallen into an atheistical neglect and contempt of all religion: and therefore are justly called

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(*s*) The reader may compare what is here said with the first chapter of the former volume, in which several of the things here mentioned are more fully insisted upon; but it was necessary to take some notice of them in this place, to show that God from the beginning made discoveries of his will to men concerning their duty.



“the world of the ungodly,” 2 Pet. ii. 5. And the prophecy of Enoch, mentioned by St. Jude, seems particularly to charge them with the most audacious profaneness, and open contempt of Religion, both in their words and actions, for which the divine judgments were denounced against them.

Noah, with his family, who survived that destruction, was no doubt well acquainted with those divine laws, for the transgression of which the sinners of the old world were so severely punished; and a man of his excellent character, we may be sure, took care to transmit them to his children and descendants: and the awful proofs of the divine justice and displeasure against the wicked and disobedient, tended to give the instructions and admonitions delivered to them by this preacher of righteousness a peculiar force. It appears from the brief hints given by Moses, that God made renewed discoveries of his will after the flood to this second father of mankind, and gave laws and injunctions which were designed to be obligatory on the whole human race. The tradition of the Jews relating to the precepts delivered to the sons of Noah is well known. And though we have not sufficient proof, that they were precisely in number or order what they pretend, yet that the substance of those precepts was then given and promulgated to mankind by Divine Authority, there is good reason to believe. And considering the narrowness of the Jewish notions, their strong prejudices against the Gentiles, and the contempt they had for them, this tradition of theirs deserves a particular regard. For it shews, that it was an antient tradition among them, derived from their ancestors, that God was the God not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles; that he had not entirely cast the Gentiles off from the beginning, without making discoveries of his will to them concerning religion, and their moral duty: but had given

them laws, upon the observance of which they were in a state of favour and acceptance with God (*t*). The moral laws which were afterwards published to the people of Israel, a summary of which is contained in the ten commandments, were in substance known before in the patriarchal times. And these divine injunctions, which were regarded as having been given by God to men, and enforced by a Divine Authority, may justly be supposed to be referred to in that remarkable passage, Gen. xviii. 19. where God saith concerning Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." And no doubt that great patriarch did what God knew and declared he would do: and from him proceeded many and great nations. If we examine the antient book of Job, who descended from Abraham, and lived before the promulgation of the Mosaic law, we shall find that there is scarce any one of the moral precepts, which were afterwards published to the people of Israel, but what may be traced in

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(*t*) In the Talmudical books mention is made of "the pious among the nations of the world," and a portion is assigned to them, as well to as the Israelites, in the world to come. Agreeably to this determination, Maimonides positively asserts, that the pious among the Gentiles have a portion in the world to come, *De Pœnit. cap. 3. i. e.*; as it is there explained, those that observed the precepts given to the sons of Noah; by whom they understood all mankind. See also *Gem. Babylon. ad titul. Aboda Zara, cap. i. Menasseh Ben Israel de Resur. Mort. lib. ii. cap. 8 et 9.* These, with other testimonies, are cited by Selden *de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. vii. cap. 10. p. 877. Edit. Lips.* The passage there quoted by him from the *Gemara Babylonica ad titul. Aboda Zara*, is remarkable; which he translates thus, "*etiam Paganum, qui diligenter legem observaverit, voluti Pontificem Maximum habendum:*" i. e. as Mr. Selden explains it, "*inter primarios Ebræorum, quantum ad præmium attinet, censendum.*"

the discourses of that excellent man and his friends, and which are there represented as having been derived by tradition from the most antient times (*u*).

After the deluge, it is probable that the heads and leaders of the dispersion, carried with them some of the main principles, both of religion and law, into the several places where they respectively settled: from whom they were transmitted to their descendants. For in those early ages, as Plato observes in the beginning of his third book of laws, the people were wont to follow the laws and customs of their parents and ancestors, and of the most antient men among them. It strengthens this, when it is considered, that the most important moral maxims were delivered in the earliest times, not in a way of reasoning, as they were afterwards by the moralists in the ages of learning and philosophy, but in a way of authority, as principles derived from the antients, and which were regarded as of a divine

(*u*) Grotius mentions some institutions and customs common to all men, and which cannot be so properly ascribed to an instinct of nature, or the evident conclusions of reason, as to a perpetual and almost uninterrupted tradition from the first ages, such as the slaying and offering up of sacrifices, the pudor circa res venereas, the solemnities of marriage, the abhorrence of incestuous copulations. *De Verit. Relig. Christ. lib. i. sect. 7.* See also *De Jur. Bel. et Pac. lib. ii. cap. 5. sect. 13.* And Mr. Le Clerc, though fond of the hypothesis, that many of the Mosaic rites were instituted in imitation of those of the Egyptians, yet, speaking of the offering of the first-fruits to God, which was in use both among the Egyptians and Hebrews, says, that it was not derived from the one of these nations to the other, but came to both from the earliest ages, and probably was originally of divine appointment. And he adds, that perhaps from the same source many other usages among both those people were derived. See *Cleric. Commentar. in Pentat. in his notes on Levit. xxiii. 10.*

original. It was a notion which generally obtained among the Heathens, that the original law was from God, and that it derived its obliging force from a Divine Authority. The learned Selden has collected many testimonies to this purpose from poets, philosophers, and other celebrated Pagan writers (x). It is probable that this notion was owing not only to the belief which obtained among them of a divine superintending providence, but to the traditionary accounts they had of God's having given laws to the first men in the most antient times. And so strongly was a sense of this impressed upon the minds of the people, that it belonged to the Divinity to give laws to mankind, that the most antient legislators, in order to give their laws a proper weight and authority, found it necessary to persuade them that these laws were not merely of their own contriving, but were what they had received from the gods. And it is probable, that they took some of the chief heads of moral law, which had been handed down by antient tradition, into the laws of their respective states and civil communities, especially as far as they tended to the preservation of the public order and good of the society. It was in the eastern countries, where men first settled after the flood, that civil polities were first formed: there they were near the fountain-head of antient tradition, and there the greatest remains of it were preserved (y). And from thence the legislators

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(x) *De Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. i. cap. 8. p. 94. et seq. edit. Lips.*

(y) "The eastern sages were famous for their excellent moral maxims, derived by tradition from the most antient times. This is observable concerning the antient wise men among the Persians, Babylonians, Bactrians, Indians, Egyptians. That celebrated Chinese philosopher and moralist Confucius, did not pretend himself to be the author of the moral precepts he delivered, but to have derived them from wise men of much greater an-



in Greece and Italy, and the western parts, principally derived their laws.

It appears from the account which hath been given, that a great deal had been done, in the course of the Divine Providence, for leading men into the knowledge of their duty. God had given laws to mankind from the beginning, and made express discoveries of his will to the first parents and ancestors of the human race, concerning the principal points of duty required of them. They were bound by his authority, and by all manner of obligations, to transmit the knowledge of them to their descendants. And this was the more easily done, as they were agreeable to the best moral sentiments of the human heart, and to the dictates of reason, which, if duly exercised, might see them to be conformable to the nature and relations of things. To which it may be added, that the good tendency of them was confirmed by observation and experience. And accordingly, the bulk of mankind, in all ages and nations, have still retained such notions of good and evil, as have laid a foundation for the approbation and disapprobation of their own minds and consciences. Taking all these things together, the laws and precepts originally given by Divine Revelation, the remains of which continued long among the Gentiles, the moral sense of things implanted in the human heart, and the dic-

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tiquity: particularly from Pung, who lived near a thousand years before him, and who also professed to follow the doctrine of the antients; and especially from Tao and Xun, two eminent Chinese legislators, who, according to the Chinese chronology, lived above 1500 years before Confucius. Or, if we should suppose their chronology not to be exact, yet still it would follow, that the knowledge of morals was derived from the earliest ages, when philosophy and sciences had made but small progress." See Navarette's *Hist. of China*, p. 123. and *Scientia Sinensis Latine exposita*, p. 120.

tates of natural reason and conscience, which were never utterly extinguished in the Pagan world, together with the prescriptions of the civil laws, which in many instances exhibited good directions for regulating the conduct; I say, taking all these things together, it must be acknowledged, that the Pagans were not left destitute of suitable helps, which, if duly improved, might have been of great use for leading them to the right knowledge and practice of moral duty (z). And undoubtedly there were eminent

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(z) St. Paul represents the Gentiles as having the "work of the law written in their hearts." The expression is evidently metaphorical, and not to be pushed too far. It is not designed to signify, as some have understood it, that all mankind have the whole law of God, comprehending every part of moral duty, written in plain characters upon their hearts: for this would prove that all men have naturally a clear knowledge of the whole of their duty without instruction: which is contrary to the most evident fact and experience, and to what the apostle elsewhere observes concerning the Gentiles. But though this could not be his meaning in this manner of expression, yet it certainly signifies, that the Gentiles, who had not the written law in their hands, were not left entirely destitute of a law. And when in any instances, they did some of the things contained in the law (for they were far from doing all things therein contained, as the apostle proves) they shewed that in those instances they had the work of the law written in their hearts; i. e. that they had an inward sense of the Divine Law in some of its important branches, so as to lay a foundation for the self-approving or self-condemning reflections of their own minds, and for their being judged by God on the account of them. This is evidently the apostle's intention in this passage. And it must be acknowledged, that there were scarce any of the Heathens, even in times of their greatest degeneracy, but had in some respects the work of the law written in their hearts, i. e. some inward sense of right and wrong, of good and evil; to which their consciences bore witness: though undoubtedly this sense of moral duty was in some

examples among them of generosity, patience, fortitude, equanimity, a love of justice, benevolence, gratitude, and other virtues. In Greece and Rome, in their best times, there seem to have been some hereditary notions, derived from their ancestors, and cherished and confirmed by education and custom, of what is virtuous, honourable, and praiseworthy, and the contrary; which had a great effect upon their conduct. But, after all, it cannot be denied, that the notions of morality among them and the other Pagans, were in many respects greatly defective, and depraved with corrupt mixtures.

As they fell from the right knowledge of the one true God, which, as a learned author (*a*), who is a warm advocate for the Morality of the Pagans, observes, is "the great foundation of morality," they fell also from a just knowledge of moral duty in very important instances. Idolatry not only introduced a great corruption into the worship of God, and all that part of duty which immediately relateth to the Supreme Being, but also into their moral conduct in other respects. Especially, when the worship of hero deities

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of them far clearer and of greater extent than in others, and in all of them vastly short of what we enjoy, who have the benefit of the Christian Revelation. The apostle, speaking of the Gentiles at the time of the publication of the Gospel, represents them as amazingly corrupted, even in their moral notions of things. He gives it as their general character, that they "had their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their hearts." And then he goes on to shew the happy change that was wrought in those of them who were "taught the truth as it is in Jesus." Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, &c.

(*a*) Sykes's *Connect. and Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 364.

became general, many of whom gave examples of vicious conduct, the worship of such gods naturally tended to corrupt their moral notions and sentiments, and to make them very loose and dissolute in their practice: to which may be added bad and immoral customs, owing to various causes. And in many places their civil laws, though they were of use to their morals in several instances, yet led them astray in others. And even their wise men and philosophers frequently advanced notions inconsistent with the truth and purity of morals, of which full proof will be given in the ensuing part of this treatise.

When idolatry and polytheism began to spread generally among the nations, it pleased God to select a peculiar people, among whom a polity was erected of an extraordinary kind; the fundamental principle of which was the knowledge and worship of the one true God, and him only, in opposition to all idolatry. He also gave them a code of holy and excellent laws, containing the main articles of the duty which God requires of men, in plain and express precepts. The moral laws obligatory on all mankind were summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments, which were promulgated by God himself with a most amazing solemnity at mount Sinai, and written in the two tables of stone, to be a standing law to that people. They were not left to themselves, to work out a system of moral duty merely by their own reason. Even such things as seemed most plain to the common sense of mankind, as the precepts prescribing the honouring our parents, and forbidding to kill, steal, and commit adultery, were bound upon them by express laws from God himself, and enforced by his own Divine Authority. And he commanded them to be very assiduous and diligent in teaching those laws to their children, and instructing them in the particulars of the duty which God



required of them (b). And it is very probable, that the fame of their laws, and the glorious proofs of a Divine Authority by which they were enforced, was spread abroad among the nations. This seems to be plainly signified in what Moses declares to the people of Israel, when speaking of the statutes and judgments which the Lord commanded them, he saith, "Know therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding, in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." He adds, "And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day (c)?" It may reasonably be supposed that as the reputation of Moses as a lawgiver was very high among the nations, his laws might, in several instances, serve as a pattern to other lawgivers, who might borrow some of the Mosaic precepts and institutions. Artapanus, as cited by Eusebius, probably speaks the sentiments of many other Heathens, when he so highly extols the wisdom of Moses and his laws, and saith, that he delivered many things very useful to mankind, and that from him the Egyptians themselves borrowed many institutions (d). This might be true in several instances, though he is mistaken in those he particularly mentions. Many learned men have observed a great affinity between some of the laws enacted in Athens and other states, and those of Moses, who published his laws before the most antient legislators that we know of published theirs. And there is good reason to believe, that the Mosaic laws were the first laws that were ever committed to writing.

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(b) Deut. vi. 6, 7.

(c) Ibid. iv. 6, 7, 8.

(d) Euseb. Præp. Evangel. lib. ix. cap. 27. p. 1.

But though it is probable the laws given by Moses, in the name of God himself, were of advantage, in many instances, to preserve the sense and knowledge of moral duty among the nations, yet as those laws were in a special manner delivered to one particular nation, who were for wise ends kept separate by some peculiar usages from other people, they were not so well fitted for universal use. It pleased God, therefore, at the time which seemed most fit to his infinite wisdom, in compassion to the wretched state of mankind, after having exercised long patience and forbearance towards them, to make a new Revelation of his Will, which was commanded to be published to all nations, in which their duty is set before them in its just extent, enforced by God's own express authority, and by such arguments and motives, as are most proper to work upon the mind. This Revelation and system of Divine Laws is brought us by the most illustrious messenger that could be sent for that purpose, the Son of God in human flesh. His Divine Mission was confirmed by the most convincing attestations; and he hath also exemplified to us the Divine Law in all its purity and excellency, in his own Sacred Life and Practice, and hath provided the most gracious assistances to help our infirmities, that we may be the better enabled to perform the duties required of us. And what great need the world stood in of such a Revelation, and consequently how thankful we should be for so great a blessing, is what I now proceed distinctly to shew.

## CHAPTER III.

A particular enquiry into the state of morality in the Heathen world. A complete rule of morals, taken in its just extent, comprehends the duties relating to God, our neighbours, and ourselves. If the Heathens had such a rule among them, it would appear either in the precepts of their religion, or in the prescriptions of their civil laws, or customs which have the force of laws, or in the doctrines and instructions of their philosophers and moralists. It is proposed distinctly to consider each of these. As to what passed among them for religion, morality did not properly make any part of it, nor was it the office of their priests to teach men virtue. As to the civil laws and constitutions, supposing them to have been never so proper for civil government, they were not fitted to be an adequate rule of morals. The best of them were, in several respects, greatly defective. Various instances produced of civil laws, and of customs which had the force of laws, among the most civilized nations, especially among the antient Egyptians and Greeks, which were contrary to the rules of morality.

**MORAL** duty, taken in its just extent, is usually and justly divided into three main branches. The first relates to the duties of piety we more immediately owe to God, which includes the rendering him that religious worship and adoration, that love and reverence, that trust and affiance, that unreserved submission, resignation, and obedience, which is due to him from his reasonable creatures. The second relates to the duties we owe to our neighbours, or to mankind, which takes in all that is comprehended in the exercise of justice, charity, mercy, benevolence, fidelity toward our fellow-creatures, and all the various offices and virtues of the social life. The third relates more immediately to ourselves, and includes all the duties of self-government, the keeping our appetites and passions under proper regulations, and maintaining a purity of body and soul, and whatsoever tends to the right ordering of our own temper, and to the attaining the true rectitude and perfection of our nature. That cannot be said to be an adequate

rule of moral duty, which does not extend to all these, with sufficient authority, clearness, and certainty. By this let us examine the state of morality in the Heathen world: and, upon an impartial enquiry, we shall find, that though that part of moral law, which relates to civil duty and social virtue, was for the most part preserved, as far as was necessary to the peace and order of society; yet as to the other branches of duty, that which relates to the duties we more immediately owe to God, and that which relates to self-government and purity, it was through the corruption of mankind greatly perverted and depraved. If the Heathens had among them a complete and settled rule of moral duty in its just extent, it must be found either in the precepts of their religion, and instructions of its ministers, or in the prescriptions of the civil laws and the institutions of the magistrates, or in customs that had the force of laws, or lastly, in the doctrines and maxims of their philosophers and moralists.

There needs not much be said as to the first of these. Religion, when it is of the right kind, and considered in its most comprehensive notion, takes in the whole of moral duty, as necessarily belonging to it, and both prescribes it in its just extent, and enforces it by the highest authority, that of God himself, and by the most important motives. But in this the Heathen religion was very defective. There were indeed some general principles of religion, which were in some measure preserved among the Pagan nations, and never were entirely extinguished, relating to the existence and attributes of the Deity, and to a Providence exercising an inspection over human actions and affairs, and rewarding the virtuous and punishing the wicked. The notions of these things, though attended with much obscurity, and perverted and debased with many corrupt mixtures, yet had a good effect in laying restraints upon vice and wickedness, and encouraging virtue, and keeping up the face



of order among the people; and were actually made use of by the wisest and ablest legislators for that purpose. But what passed for religion among the Pagans and was established by their laws, and administered by their priests, neither taught any scheme of doctrines necessary to be believed, nor held forth a code of laws or rule of moral duty for regulating and directing the practice. It consisted properly in the public rites and ceremonies to be observed in the worship of their deities. "The priests (as Mr. Locke observes) made it not their business to teach men virtue (*e*)."  
Their office was, according to the account Varro gives of it, to instruct men what gods they were to worship, what sacrifices they were to offer to their several deities, and to direct them in what manner they were to observe the appointed rites. It is true, that Cicero, in his *Oratio pro domo sua ad Pontifices*, represents them as having a general inspection over the manners of the citizens: but this they did not properly as priests of religion, but as ministers of the state. For in the Roman government, the same persons acted in both capacities, and the priesthood was so modelled as to answer the civil and political views of the commonwealth. It is a just observation of the Baron Puffendorf, that "what the Romans called Religion was chiefly insti-

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(*e*) To the same purpose Lactantius observes, that those who taught the worship of the gods, gave no directions as to what related to the regulation of men's manners, and to the conduct of life. "*Nihil ibi disseritur, quod proficiat ad mores excolendos, vitamque formandam.*" And that among the Pagans, philosophy [or the doctrine of morals] and the religion of the gods, were entirely distinct, and separated from one another. "*Philosophia et religio deorum disjuncta sunt, longeque discreta.*" *Divin. Instit. lib. iv. cap. 3.* See also Augustin. *de Civit. Dei, lib. ii. cap. 4. 6. et 7.*

tuted for the benefit of the state, that they might be the better able to rule the minds of the people, according to the conveniencies and exigencies of the public." He adds, that "there were no certain heads or articles of religion among the Romans, whence the people might be instructed concerning the Being and Will of God, or how they ought to regulate their practice and actions so as to please God (*f*).” Those who were diligent in the observation of the sacred customary rites, and worshipped the gods according to the laws, were looked upon as having fulfilled the duties of religion. But no farther regard was had to their morals, than as the interest of the state was concerned. If at any time the public was exposed to great calamities, and it was thought necessary to appease the gods, and avert their displeasure, repentance and a reformation of manners was never prescribed by the priests, as one of the means appointed by religion for that purpose: but they had recourse on such occasions to some odd and trifling ceremonies; such as the dictator's striking a nail into a door, or something of the like nature (*g*). So far was the Heathen religion, and the worship of their deities, from giving men a right notion of morality, or engaging them to the practice of it, that in many instances the rites made use of in the worship of their gods were of an immoral nature, and instead of promoting the practice of virtue, had a tendency to encourage vice and licentiousness. This sufficiently appears from the instances produced in the former volume, chap. vii. To the instances there mentioned, I now add, what a very

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(*f*) Puffendorf's *Introduct. to the Hist. of Europe*, chap. 1. sect. 10.

(*g*) Hume's *Nat. History of Religion*, p. 105. *Div. Legation of Moses*, vol. I. p. 97. edit. 4th.

learned writer has observed, that Aristotle, in his *Politics*, "having blamed all lewd and obscene images and pictures, excepts those of the gods, which religion has sanctified (*h*)."

It appears then, that if a complete rule of morals was to be found among the Pagans, we must not look for it in their religion, but either in the civil laws and constitutions, and customs which obtained the force of laws, or in the doctrines and precepts of the philosophers and moralists.

Many have spoke with admiration of the civil laws and constitutions, which were in force among the Pagan nations, as if they were sufficient to direct and regulate their moral conduct. Some of the most eminent of the antient philosophers seem to resolve the whole duty of a good man into obedience to the laws of his country. Socrates defines the just man to be one that obeys the laws of the republic, and that he becomes unjust by transgressing them (*i*). And Xenophon accordingly observes, that that philosopher was in all things for adhering closely and inviolably to the laws, both publicly and privately, and exhorted all men to do so (*k*). And many passages might be produced to shew, that both he and Plato, and the philosophers in general, urged it as the duty of the citizens to make the laws of their country the rule of their practice, both in religious and civil matters. Some modern authors have talked in the same strain, and have laid the chief stress on human laws and government, as giving the best directions, and furnishing the most effectual means, for the securing and improving the moral state (*l*). It cannot be denied, that there

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(*h*) Hume's *Nat. History of Religion*, p. 154.

(*i*) Xenoph. *Memor. Socr.* lib. iv. cap. 4. sect. 13.

(*k*) *Ibid.* lib. i. sect. 1, 2, et seq.

(*l*) Lord Bolingbroke's *Works*, Vol. V. p. 480, 481. edit. 4to.

were many excellent laws and constitutions among the Heathen nations, and which were of great use in regulating the manners of men, and preserving good order in society: but it is no hard matter to prove, that the civil laws of any community are very imperfect measures of moral duty. A man may obey those laws, and yet be far from being truly virtuous: he may not be obnoxious to the penalties of those laws, and yet be a vicious and bad man. Nor indeed is it the proper design of those laws to render men really and inwardly virtuous, but so to govern their outward behaviour, as to maintain public order. The highest end they propose is the temporal welfare and prosperity of the state. The heart, the proper seat of virtue and vice, is not within the cognizance of civil laws and human governments. Nor can the sanctions of those laws, or any rewards and punishments which the ablest human legislators can contrive, be ever applied to enforce the whole of moral duty. They cannot reach to the inward temper, or the secret affections and dispositions of the soul, and intentions of the will, on which yet the morality of human actions, or their being good and evil in the sight of God, does principally depend. Seneca says very well, that “it is a narrow notion of innocence to measure a man’s goodness only by the law. Of how much larger extent is the rule of duty or of good offices, than that of legal right? How many things are there which piety, humanity, liberality, justice, fidelity require, which yet are not within the compass of the public statutes? —*Quam angusta innocentia est ad legem bonum esse? Quanto latius officiorum patet quam juris regula? Quam*

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This also is the scheme of the author of the book *De l’Esprit*, who makes the law of the state to be the only rule and measure of virtue and duty, and what he calls a good legislation to be the only means of promoting it.



multa pietas, humanitas, liberalitas, justitia, fides exigunt, quæ omnia extra publicas tabulas sunt (*m*)?"

But let us more particularly enquire into the most celebrated civil laws and institutions among those that have been accounted the most civilized and best policed nations.

The Egyptians were antiently much admired for the wisdom of their laws, which were looked upon to be well fitted for the maintenance of public order: but they were far from furnishing adequate rules of virtue, and were, in some respects, greatly deficient. There is a passage of Porphyry, which has been thought to give an advantageous idea of the Egyptian morality. He informs us, that when they embalmed the body of any of the nobles, they were wont to take out the belly, and put it into a chest; and then holding up the chest towards the sun, one of the embalmers made an oration or speech in the name of the defunct person; which contained the dead man's apology for himself, and the righteousness on the account of which he prayed to be admitted to the fellowship of the eternal gods. "O Lord the Sun, and all ye gods that give life to men, receive me, and admit me to the fellowship of the eternal gods: for whilst I lived in the world, I religiously wor-

(*m*) Sen. de Ira. lib. ii. cap. 27. The learned bishop of Gloucester has set this matter in a very clear light, in his *Divine Legation of Moses*, vol. I. book i. sect. 2. p. 13, et seq. where he shews, that the laws of civil society, alone considered, are insufficient to prevent or cure moral disorders; that they can have no further efficacy than to restrain men from open transgressions; nor can their influence be extended thus far in all cases; especially where the irregularity is owing to the violence of the sensual passions: they also overlook what are called the duties of imperfect obligation, such as gratitude, hospitality, charity, &c. though these duties are of considerable importance in the moral character.

shipped the gods which my parents shewed me: those that generated my body I always honoured: I neither killed any man, nor fraudulently took away any thing that was committed to my trust; nor have I been guilty of any other very heinous or inexpressible wickedness; if in my life-time I offended in eating or drinking any of the things which it was not lawful for me to eat or drink; the offence was not committed by myself, but by these;" pointing to the chest, which contained his belly and entrails, and which was then thrown into the river: after which, the rest of the body was embalmed as pure. Porphyry cites for this Euphantus, who translated this prayer or oration out of the Egyptian tongue (*n*). This may seem to have been well contrived to point out the most eminent parts of a virtuous life and character, which tended to recommend a man to the divine favour. But it is to be observed, that the sun is here addressed to as the Supreme Lord, together with other gods, who are represented as the authors and givers of life: and that the first and principal thing here mentioned as a proof of the person's piety is, his having worshipped the gods which his parents had shewn him. And what kind of deities they were which the Egyptians worshipped is generally known. So that they were wrong with respect to the fundamental principle of morality, the knowledge and worship of one true God. A late learned and ingenious author has shewn, that though the Egyptians had some very good constitutions, there reigned in their government a multitude of abuses and essential defects, authorized by their laws, and the fundamental principles of their state. There were great indecencies and impurities in many of their public established rites and ceremonies of religion. It was permitted among them for brothers and sisters to marry one another. There

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(*n*) Porph. de Abstin. lib. iv. sect. 10.

is a law of theirs mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, lib. i. cap. 9. p. 69. edit. Amst. and by Aulus Gellius, lib. ii. cap. 20. which, under pretence of making it easy for the citizens to recover what was stolen from them, really encouraged and authorized theft: it not only assured the thieves of impunity, but of a reward, by given them the fourth part of the prize, upon their restoring that which they had stolen (*o*). The same author observes, that the Egyptians were universally cried out against for their want of faith and honesty, as he shews from many testimonies (*p*). And Sextus Empiricus informs us, that among many of the Egyptians, for women to prostitute themselves was accounted ευκλεες, a glorious or honourable thing (*q*).

It is universally acknowledged, that the Greeks were amongst the most knowing and civilized nations of antiquity. There the most celebrated philosophers and moralists opened their schools, and among them learning, and the arts, eminently flourished. Accordingly, they had a very high opinion of their own wisdom, and looked upon the rest of the world as much inferior to them, and to whom they gave the common title of Barbarians. Let us see therefore whether their laws and constitutions bid fairer for improvement in morals, than those of other nations. Some of their wisest men and legislators travelled into Egypt, and other parts of the east, to observe their laws, and transplant such as they most approved into their own. It has been already hinted, that the learned have observed a near affinity in some remarkable instances between the ancient Attic laws, as also those of the twelve tables, and

(*o*) De l'Origine des Loix, des Arts, &c. tom. I. liv. i. art. 4. p. 49. et tom. III. p. 28. et p. 352. a la Haye 1758.

(*p*) Ibid. p. 354.

(*q*) Pyrrh. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.



those of Moses (*r*); which makes it probable, that the laws delivered to the Israelites, which were of a divine original, and were of greater antiquity than any of the laws of the Grecian states, were in several respects of great advantage to other nations. Excellent laws and constitutions there undoubtedly were in several of the Grecian republics: but if the best of them were selected, and formed into one code, they would be far from exhibiting a complete rule of morals. They were all, like the laws of other nations, fundamentally wrong in all that part of moral duty which relates to the service and adoration we owe to the one true God; and in several respects also in granting too great an indulgence to the sensual passions, and in making some important points of morality give way to what they looked upon to be the interest of the state.

The laws of Lycurgus have been highly celebrated both by antients and moderns. Plutarch observes, that this law-giver was pronounced by the oracle the beloved of God, and rather a god than a man: that he stands an undeniable proof, that a perfect wise man is not a mere notion and chimera, as some have thought, and has obliged the world with a nation of philosophers. He expresses a high admiration of the Lacedæmonian institutions, as excellently fitted to form men to the exercise of virtue, and to maintain and to promote mutual love among the citizens.

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(*r*) See Sam. Petit. Comment. in Leg. Attic. printed at Paris 1635. See also Grot. in Matt. v. 28. et de Verit. Rel. Christ. lib. i. sect. 15. p. 28. edit. Cleric. It is true, that Mr. Le Clerc, in a note which he has there added, supposes, after Dr. Spenser, that both the Athenians and the Hebrews derived the laws Grotius refers to from the Egyptians. But no authorities can be produced to shew that the Egyptians had such laws, but what are much posterior to the time of Moses.



He prefers them to the laws of all the other Grecian states, and observes, that all those who have written well of politics, as Plato, Diogenes, Zenø, and others, have taken Lycurgus for their model: and that Aristotle himself highly extols him, as having deserved even greater honours than the Spartans paid him, though they offered sacrifices to him as to a god (*s*). Many of the moderns, and among others the celebrated Mons. de Montesquieu professeth himself a great admirer of the laws of Lycurgus. He observes, that he promoted virtue by means which seemed contrary to it (*t*). But I think there are several of his laws and institutions to which this observation cannot justly be applied; and which, instead of promoting the practice of virtue, counteracted it in important instances. Some of his admirers have acknowledged, that his laws were all calculated to establish a military comònwealth, and that every thing was looked upon as just, which was thought to contribute to that end. Plato observes, in his first book of laws, that they were fitted rather to render men valiant than just. Aristotle makes the same observation (*u*). And Plutarch owns, that some person blamed the laws of Lycurgus as well contrived to make men good soldiers, but very defective in civil justice and honesty. It appears from the testimony of several authors, as well as from some remarkable facts, that they were for sacrificing probity and every other consideration, to what they thought the good of the state required; and judged every method lawful which might procure them suc-

(*s*) See Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus, especially at the latter end.

(*t*) L'Esprit des Loix, vol. i. livre iv. ch. 6. p. 49, 50. Edit. Edinb.

(*u*) Arist. Politic. lib. ii. cap. 9. p. 331. et lib. vii. cap. 14. p. 443. Oper. tom. II. edit. Paris.

cess. The breach of faith cost them nothing. Herodotus says, that they who were acquainted with the genius of that people knew that their actions were generally contrary to their words, and that they could not depend upon them in any matter (*x*). And though they were undoubtedly very brave, yet they valued a victory more which was gained by deceit and guile, than one that was obtained by open valour. How haughtily and cruelly, as well as perfidiously, did they behave towards Athens and Thebes, and all those whom they thought it their interest to oppress!

Many of their laws and customs were contrary to humanity. And the rigour of their discipline tended in several instances to stifle the sentiments of tenderness and benevolence, of mercy and compassion, so natural to the human breast. I have in the former part of this Work, chap. vii. taken notice of their custom of whipping boys, even to death, at the altar of Diana Orthia. To which it may be added, that their young men and boys were wont to meet and fight with the utmost rage and fierceness on certain days of the year; of which Cicero says he himself was witness (*y*). But nothing could exceed their cruelty to their slaves, the helotes, as they called them, who laboured the ground for them, and performed all their works and manufactures. These slaves could have no justice done them, whatever insults or injuries they suffered. They were regarded as the slaves not merely of one particular master, but of the public, so that every one might injure them with impunity. Not only did they treat them in their general conduct with great harshness and insolence, but it was part of their policy to massacre them, on several occasions, in cold blood, and without provocation. Several authors

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(*x*) Herod. lib. ix. n. 51. Francof. 1605.

(*y*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 27. p. 401. edit. Davis.

have mentioned their *Κεῖπλια*, so called from their lying in ambuscade, in thickets and clefts of rocks, from which they issued out upon the helotes, and killed all they met; and sometimes they set upon them in the open day, and murdered the ablest and stoutest of them, as they were at work in the fields. The design of this was to prevent their slaves from growing too numerous or powerful, which might endanger the state. But as M. de Montesquieu very properly observes, the danger was only owing to their cruel and unjust treatment of them; whereas among the Athenians, who treated their slaves with great gentleness, there is no instance of their proving troublesome or dangerous to the public (z). Plutarch is loth to believe that this inhuman custom was instituted by Lycurgus, though he does not deny that it was in use among the Lacedæmonians. But Aristotle says, it was an institution of Lycurgus. And whoever duly considers the spirit of several of his laws, will not think him incapable of it. And from the same cruel policy it was, that, as Thucydides informs us, they destroyed two thousand of the helotes, whom they had armed, when the exigences of the state required it, and who had served them bravely and faithfully in their wars.

Another instance of the inhumanity of the laws of Lycurgus was this. The father was obliged by the laws to bring his child to a certain place appointed for that purpose, to be examined by a committee of the men of that tribe to which he belonged. Their business was carefully to view the infant, and if they found it deformed, and of a bad constitution, they caused it to be cast into a deep cavern near the mountain Taygetus, as thinking it neither good for the child itself, nor for the public, that it should be brought up.

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(z) *L'Esprit des Loix*, vol. i. liv. xv. chap. 16. p. 356, 357.



Plutarch, who takes notice of this, passes no censure upon it. And he pronounces in general, at the conclusion of his life of Lycurgus, that he could see no injustice, or want of equity, in any of that lawgiver's institutions.

Many have taken notice of that constitution of his, by which the Spartan boys were trained up to dextrous thieving. They were obliged to steal their victuals, or be without them; which put them upon watching opportunities, and seizing what they could lay their hands on. It behoved them to do this with dexterity and activity; for if they were taken in the fact, they were whipped most unmercifully; not for stealing, as Sextus Empiricus observes, but for being caught (*a*). This was designed to sharpen their invention, and to exercise their agility and courage. Some authors, and among others, the celebrated Mr. Rollin, in his *Antient History*, are of opinion, that this could not be called theft, because it was allowed by the state. But, I think, it cannot be denied, that in this method the youth were early enured to arts of rapine, and were taught to think there was no great hurt in invading another man's property, and to form contrivances for that purpose.

Notwithstanding all the austerity which appeared in the laws of Lycurgus, there were some of his constitutions, which seemed to be very little consistent with modesty and decency. There were common baths in which the men and women bathed together. And it was ordered, that the young maidens should appear naked in the public exercises, as well as the young men, and that they should dance naked with them at the solemn festivals and sacrifices (*b*): and as

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(*a*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.

(*b*) That eminent philosopher Plato, in forming the model of a perfect commonwealth, proposed the laws of Lycurgus, in this and other instances, for his pattern, as I shall have occasion to



to married women, Lycurgus allowed husbands to impart the use of their wives to handsome and deserving men, in order to the begetting healthy and vigorous children for the commonwealth. It is a little odd to observe that learned and grave philosopher Plutarch endeavouring to justify these constitutions, in his *Life of Lycurgus*. That lawgiver was

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observe afterwards. Thus neither the philosopher nor lawgiver shewed any great regard to the rules of modesty and purity. A remarkable proof this, that the greatest men among the Pagans, when left to their own judgments in matters of morality, were apt to form wrong notions concerning it, even in instances where one should think the dictates of nature and reason might have given them better directions. It may not be improper, on this occasion, to mention an observation of an eminent political writer, Mons. de Montesquieu. He observes, that all nations are agreed in looking upon the incontinence of women as a thing that deserves contempt: and he supposes that "a natural modesty is implanted in women, as a defence and preservative against incontinence: that therefore it is not true, that incontinence follows the laws of nature: it violates those laws: and on the contrary, it is modesty and reservedness that follows those laws." He adds, that "where the physical force of certain climates carries persons to violate the natural law of the two sexes, and that of intelligent beings, it is the business of the magistrate to make civil laws, which may overcome the nature of the climate, and re-establish the primitive laws of nature\*." According to this way of reasoning, a legislator is much to be blamed, who, like Lycurgus, establishes constitutions which tend to break down that natural fence of modesty, which is designed as a preservative against incontinence. In this certainly M. de Montesquieu has judged much better than another writer of the same nation, the author of the book *De l'Esprit*, who seems to make the great art of legislation to consist in giving a loose to the most licentious inclinations, and proposes the indulgence of them as a reward to merit, and an incentive to the noblest actions.

\* *L'Esprit des Loix*, vol. I. liv. xvi. chap. 12. p. 373, 374.

for sacrificing modesty, and the sanctity of the marriage-bed, to what he thought was for the benefit of the state. But these constitutions had, as might reasonably have been expected, a very bad influence upon their morals. The Spartan women were accounted the most immodest and licentious of any in Greece, as Aristotle observes (*c*).

I shall conclude this account of the Lacedæmonians, and of their laws and customs, with the account given of them by a late ingenious author: that they were a people proud, imperious, deceitful, perfidious, capable of sacrificing every thing to their ambition and their interest, and who had no esteem of the liberal arts and sciences. And after some other strokes of the like nature, he concludes, "Such were the manners and the genius of a people admired and proposed by all profane antiquity as a pattern of wisdom and virtue.—*Telles étoient les mœurs et le génie d'un peuple admire, et propose, par toute l'antiquité profane, comme un modèle de sagesse et de vertu (d).*"

The law and custom of exposing children, so contrary to the dictates of nature and humanity, was not peculiar to Lacedæmon, but was common in other parts of Greece, as well as among other nations. And it is reckoned as a singular thing among the Thebans, that the law forbade any Theban to expose his infant under pain of death (*e*). Even the most eminent philosophers, in their treatises of laws, prescribed or approved this unnatural practice. Plato would have it ordered by law, that men or women, who are past the age of getting and conceiving strong children, should take care that their offspring, if they should have any, should not come to the birth, or see the light; or if that

(*c*) Arist. Politic. lib. ii. cap. 9.

(*d*) De l'Origine des Loix, des Arts, &c. tom. III. p. 380.

(*e*) Ælian. Histor. var. lib. ii. cap. 7.

should happen, they should expose them without nourishment (*f*). Aristotle expressly says, that it should be a law not to bring up or nourish any child that is weak or maimed: and that when the law of the country forbids to expose infants, it is necessary to limit the number of those that should be begotten: and if any one begets children above the number limited by the laws, he advises to procure abortion before the fœtus has life and sense (*g*). Justly is this mentioned by Mr. Locke, as a remarkable instance to shew, that reason had failed mankind in a perfect rule, and resolved not the doubts that had risen amongst the studious and thinking philosophers; nor had been able to convince the most civilized parts of the world, that they had not given, nor could without a crime take away the lives of their children, by exposing them (*h*)."

But what I would especially take notice of as a palpable proof of the great corruption of the Greeks, both in their notions and practice, with regard to morals, is, that the most unnatural filthiness was countenanced and encouraged in several places, by their public laws, and almost every where by their known customs.

It is a charge that has been often brought against them, that they were very much addicted to the impure love of boys. I am sensible there is a great authority against it. The learned Doctor, afterwards Archbishop Potter, in his excellent Greek Antiquities, has taken great pains to clear them from that charge; and seems willing to have it thought, that the love of boys, so generally allowed and practised

(*f*) Plato Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 461. edit. Lugd.

(*g*) Arist. Politic. lib. vii. cap. 16. Oper. tom. II. p. 447. edit. Paris.

(*h*) Locke's Reason. of Christ. in his Works, vol. II. p. 534. edit. 3d.

among them, was perfectly innocent and virtuous. And it were to be wished, for the honour of human nature, that it could be proved to be so. I am far from saying, that the love of boys, for which the Greeks were so noted, was universally of the criminal and vicious kind. But that this most abominable and unnatural vice was very common among them, and, in some of their cities and states, encouraged by their laws, admits of a clear proof. There need no other vouchers for it, than the authors produced by this learned writer himself. One of these authors is Maximus Tyrius. And it is observable, that, at the end of his tenth dissertation, he celebrates it as a most heroic act of Agesilaus, a more glorious conquest than any he had achieved against the Persians, and as more to be admired than the fortitude of Leonidas, who died for his country, that being in love with a beautiful Barbarian boy, he suffered it to go no farther than looking at him, and admiring him (*i*). Nothing could be more impertinent and absurd than this encomium on Agesilaus, if the Spartan love of boys was generally as pure and innocent as the same author in that very dissertation represents it. The testimonies of Xenophon and Plutarch are produced to shew that the love of boys at Sparta, and which was prescribed by the laws of Lycurgus, was pure and laudable. But the prejudices these two

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(*i*) Epictetus has a passage not unlike this in commendation of Socrates's extraordinary virtue. "Go to Socrates (says he) and see him lying by Alcibiades, yet slighting his youth and beauty. Consider what a victory he was conscious of obtaining! What an Olympic prize! So that, by heaven, one might justly salute him; Hail! incredibly great, universal victor!" If this shameful vice had not been extremely common, even at Athens, Socrates's abstaining from it could not have been celebrated, as it is here by Epictetus, as an act of virtue that deserves the highest admiration. See Epictetus's Dissert. book ii. ch. 18. sect. 4.



great authors had in favour of the Lacedæmonians, the high opinion they entertained of their laws and customs, and their willingness to put the fairest colours upon them, is well known, and does not a little weaken the force of their testimony. It will soon appear, that Plutarch is not very consistent with himself in what he advances on this head. As to Xenophon, it is to be observed, that at the same time that he vindicates the Lacedæmonians, he represents that criminal love as very common among the Greeks, and in many places authorized by the laws: "I know (says he) that there are many who will believe nothing of this;" i. e. that the love of boys among the Spartans was innocent and virtuous; "nor do I wonder at it, the unnatural love of boys is become so common, that in many places it is established by the public laws." This testimony of Xenophon is very remarkable with regard to others of the Greeks, though he will not allow that the Lacedæmonians were guilty of it. But Plato, his contemporary, whose testimony must be allowed to be of great weight, in his eighth book of laws, supposes that the masculine love, which he there condemns as contrary to nature, was allowed both among the Lacedæmonians and the Cretans (*k*). The excellent writer above-mentioned will by no means allow that the love of boys usual among the Cretans was criminal; and asserts, that nothing passed between them and their lovers that was contrary to the strictest rules of virtue: for which he quotes Maximus Tyrius and Strabo, who tells us, that the Cretans professed that it is was not so much the external beauty of a boy, as his virtuous disposition, his courage and conduct, that recommended him to their love. And this might be the pretence they alleged; and in some in-

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(*k*) Plato de Leg. lib. viii. Oper. p. 645. G. H. edit. Lugd.

stances might really be the case. But, I think whosoever impartially examines what Strabo says concerning it, will not be apt to look upon the love he there speaks of as very innocent. The whole turn of the passage seems to me to have a contrary appearance. And I find the learned and ingenious author *De l'Origine des Loix*, &c. looks upon it in the same light, and cites this very passage of Strabo to shew that unnatural lust was encouraged by the Cretan law. And Plutarch, at the same time that he represents the love of boys in use at Athens and Sparta as having nothing blameable in it, expressly condemns that sort of it in Crete, which they called by the name of ἀπαργμος (*l*), which is that very love which Strabo speaks of in the passage referred to (*m*). Plato, not only in the eighth book of laws already cited, but in his first book of laws, blames the Cretans for masculine mixtures; and intimates, that they were wont to justify themselves by the example of Jupiter and Gany-mede (*n*). Aristotle tells us, that to prevent their having too many children, there was a law among the Cretans, for encouraging that sort of unnatural love (*o*).

It appears from some passages of Plutarch, that he was willing to have it thought that the love of boys in use among the Greeks was a pure and generous affection: but at other times he makes acknowledgments which plainly shew the contrary. In his life of Pelopidas, he tells us, that the legislators encouraged the love of boys, to temper the manners of their youth, and that it produced excellent effects, and particularly among the Thebans. But

(*l*) Plutarch. de liber. educandis, Oper. tom. II. p. 11. edit. Xyl.

(*m*) Strabo, lib. x. p. 739, 740. edit. Amst.

(*n*) Plato de Leg. lib. i. Oper. p. 569. G. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(*o*) Arist. Politic. lib. ii. cap. 10. Oper. tom. II. p. 333. A. edit. Paris. 1629.

the same great philosopher, who undoubtedly was inclined to give a favourable account of the Thebans whose countryman he was, in his treatise *De liberis educandis*, expressly declares, that such masculine loves were to be avoided, as were in use at Thebes and Elis (*p*). And his joining Thebes with Elis shews that it is a very criminal passion he speaks of. For we have the testimony of Maximus Tyrius, in that dissertation in which he endeavours to vindicate some of the Grecian states from the charge, that the Elians encouraged that licentiousness, as he calls it, by a law (*q*). Nothing can be more evident than it is from Plutarch's treatise called *Ἔρωτις* or *Amatorius*, that this abominable vice had made a great progress among the Greeks, and was openly countenanced and pleaded for. One of his dialogists there argues for it at large, and highly commends it. He represents the Lacedæmonians, Bæotians, Cretans, and Chalcidians, as much addicted to it. And another of his dialogists, who, it is to be supposed, expresses Plutarch's own sentiments, condemns it in very strong terms, and shews its pernicious effects. Athenæus tells us, that it was not only practised, but encouraged and promoted in many of the cities of Greece (*r*). At Athens indeed there was a law against it. And Plutarch seems to recommend the love of boys in use at Sparta and Athens as virtuous, and worthy to be emulated, though he condemns that at Thebes and Elis (*s*). As to Sparta, the accounts given of it by antient authors, and by Plutarch himself, seem to vary. But, whatever might have been the original design of the constitution established by Lycurgus,

(*p*) Plutarch. ubi supra, p. 11.

(*q*) Max. Tyr. Dissert. 10. p. 128. Oxon. 1677.

(*r*) Deipnosoph. lib. xiii. p. 602. edit. Lugd.

(*s*) Plutarch. ubi supra.

with respect to it, there is too much reason to think, that, as it was generally practised among the Lacedæmonians, it was not very innocent. With regard to the Athenians, Plutarch tells us concerning their great lawgiver Solon, that it appears from his poems, that he was not proof against beautiful boys, and had not courage enough to resist the force of love. He observes, that he was in love with Pisis-tratus, because of his extraordinary handsomeness: and that by a law he forbade pæderasty or the love of boys to slaves; making that, as Plutarch observes, an honourable and reputable action; and as it were inviting the worthy to the practice of that which he commanded the unworthy to forbear (*t*). And in his *Amatorius* above referred to, he introduces Protogenes, one of his dialogists, arguing in favour of that practice, from this constitution of Solon (*u*). Maximus Tyrius, who takes a great deal of pains to vindicate Socrates from that charge, owns, that at the time when this philosopher flourished, this vicious passion had arrived to the greatest height, both in the other parts of Greece, and particularly at Athens; and that all places were full of unjust or wicked lovers, and boys that were enticed and deluded (*x*). So that if there was a law against it at Athens, it seems to have been little regarded.

To the testimonies which have been produced may be added that of Cicero, who represents that practice as very common among the Greeks: and that what helped to introduce and spread it, was the custom of the youths appearing naked in the public exercises. And he observes, that their poets, great men, and even their learned men and philoso-

(*t*) Plutarch. See Plutarch's *Life of Solon*, at the beginning.

(*u*) Plutarch. *Oper.* tom. II. p. 751. edit. Xyland.

(*x*) Max. Tyr. *dissert.* 10. initio.



phers, not only practised, but gloried in it (*y*). And accordingly he elsewhere represents it as the custom, not of particular cities only, but of Greece in general. Speaking of the things that might be thought to contribute to Dionysius's happiness, he mentions his having paramours of that kind "according to the custom of Greece.—Habebat, more Græciæ, quosdam adolescentes amore conjunctos (*z*).” And in a passage cited by Lactantius, he mentions it as a bold and hazardous thing in the Greeks, that they consecrated the images of the Loves and Cupids in the places of their public exercises (*a*).

I have insisted the more largely upon this, because there cannot be a more convincing proof, that the laws and customs, even in the most learned and civilized nations, are not to be depended upon as proper guides in matters of morality. The Greeks are regarded and admired as the most eminent of the Pagan nations, for their knowledge in philosophy, and especially in morals, and as having cultivated their reason in an extraordinary degree. They valued themselves mightily upon their wisdom, and the excellency of their laws; and yet their laws or generally allowed customs, shewed that they were become amazingly corrupt, both in their notions and practices, with regard to morals; and that in instances, as to which one would have thought the light of nature would have given them a sufficient direction. I say, they were become very corrupt in their notions as well as practices. For though some of them acknowledge the

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(*y*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. iv. cap. 33.

(*z*) Ibid. lib. v. cap. 20. p. 385. edit. Davis.

(*a*) "Magnum Cicero audaxque consilium suscepisse Græciam dicit, quod Cupidinum et Amorum simulachra in gymnasiis consecrasset." Lactant. Divin. Instit. lib. i. cap. 20. p. 106. Lugd. Bat. 1660.

evil and turpitude of that unnatural vice, yet, in the general opinion, it seems to have passed among them for no fault at all, or a very light one. And many of their philosophers and moralists, as I shall have occasion to shew afterwards, represented it as a matter perfectly indifferent. Barolesanes, an antient and learned writer, in a large extract quoted from him by Eusebius, after having mentioned some barbarous nations, which were much addicted to that vice, and others who had it in abhorrence, observes, that in Greece such kind of masculine loves were not accounted disgraceful, even to the wise (*b*). St. Paul, therefore, in drawing up the charge of an amazing corruption of morals in the Heathen world, very justly put this in the first place, as being both of the highest enormity, and very common not only among the people, but the philosophers themselves. Nor is it probable, that any thing less than a Divine Law, enforced by the authority of God himself, and by the most express denunciations of the Divine Wrath and Vengeance against such crimes, could have over-ruled the force of such inveterate custom and example, countenanced by the maxims and practice of those who made high pretences to wisdom and reason.

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(*b*) Euseb. Præp. Evangel. lib. vi. cap. 10. p. 276. D.

## CHAPTER IV.

Farther instances of civil laws and customs among the Pagan nations. Those of the antient Romans considered. The laws of the twelve tables, though mightily extolled, were far from exhibiting a complete rule of morals. The law of Romulus concerning the exposing of diseased and deformed children. This continued to be practised among the Romans. Their cruel treatment of their slaves. Their gladiatory shows contrary to humanity. Unnatural lusts common among them as well as the Greeks. Observations on the Chinese laws and customs. Other laws and customs of nations mentioned, which are contrary to good morals.

FROM the Greeks let us pass to the Romans, whose good policy and government has been greatly admired, and who have been regarded as the most virtuous of all the Pagan nations. And it must be owned, that in the most antient times of the Roman state, they were free from those vices which luxury and effeminacy are apt to produce. There were shining examples among them of probity, justice, fidelity, fortitude, a contempt of pleasures and riches, and love to their country. But the body of the people were rude and ignorant to a great degree, and sunk in an idolatry and superstition, than which nothing could be more gross and stupid. Their virtue was rough and savage: they made glory to consist chiefly in military bravery: and their love to their country was, for the most part, only a strong passion for rendering it the mistress of all others. To this they made every thing give way; and often broke through the rules of justice and equity, to promote what they thought the interest of the state; jealous of any people, that were for preserving themselves in a state of liberty and independency. To which it may be added, that they were for a long time without a written code of laws. And the people suffered so

much by the injustice, insolence, and arbitrary oppression of their magistrates and great men, even in what are accounted the most virtuous times of the republic, that they insisted very justly upon having a written body of laws, which should be the standing rule of judgment. This was accordingly accomplished. Select persons were chosen to collect and compile laws for the commonwealth, who travelled into Greece for that purpose; and with great sagacity chose the best institutions of the Grecian states, and other nations. Hence came the famous laws of the twelve tables, which have been so much celebrated both by antients and moderns. Cicero, who was certainly a very able judge, frequently speaks of them in terms of the highest approbation. And particularly, in his first book *De Oratore*, in the person of that great lawyer and orator L. Crassus. He not only prefers them to all other civil laws and constitutions, particularly to those of the Greeks, but to all the writings of the philosophers. He makes no scruple to declare, that though all men should be displeased at him for it, he would freely own it as his opinion, "That the single book of the twelve tables was superior to the libraries of all the philosophers, both in the weight of its authority, and in the abundant utility arising from it (c)."

But however those laws might deserve great praise, considered as good civil constitutions, I believe there are few that will pretend, that they exhibited a perfect rule of morals, or gave men a clear and full direction as to every branch of their duty. That part of those laws which related

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(c) "Fremant omnes licet, dicam quod sentiam, bibliothecas omnium philosophorum, unus mihi videtur duodecim tabularum libellus, siquis legum fontes et capita viderit, et authoritatis pondere et utilitatis ubertate superare." *Cic. de Orat. lib. i. cap. 42, 43.*



to sacred things, was evidently calculated, like the laws of other Heathen nations, to uphold the public idolatry and polytheism. The body of these laws was designed to regulate the conduct of the citizens towards the public, and towards one another, to settle men's private rights, and to be the rule of judgment for the regulation of the civil policy, and for the security and advantage of the state. And many of their constitutions were undoubtedly excellent, taken in this view; but, like other civil laws, could be of no great force for regulating the inward temper and dispositions of the mind. Mons. de Montesquieu observes, that there was an extreme severity in several of their laws, suitable to the rudeness and rigidity of the antient Romans. The law concerning debtors is mentioned by several authors, and was remarkable for its inhumanity. The creditor was allowed to keep the debtor in close confinement sixty days; and afterwards, in case he did not pay the debt within the time prescribed by the law, or find sufficient security, he was condemned to lose his head, or to be sold as a slave. This might seem to be severe enough, but the law went farther still, and permitted the creditors, if there were several of them, to cut the dead body of the debtor in pieces, and divide it among them. Nothing can excuse the barbarity of this law, even supposing it to have been designed only in terrorem. And indeed the last part of it was so shocking that we are told there was no instance of its being put in execution, but it fell, and was abrogated by disuse (*d*).

Dionysius Halicarnasseus, who was a great admirer of the institutions of the antient Romans, informs us, that Romulus obliged the citizens to bring up all their male children, and the eldest of the females. They were allowed,

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(*d*) Quintilian takes notice of this law, lib. v. cap. 6. So does A. Gellius. And Tertullian refers to it, Apol. cap. 4.

therefore, to destroy all their female children but the eldest. And even with regard to their male children, if they were deformed or monstrous, he permitted the parents to expose them, after having shewn them to five of their nearest neighbours (*e*). There is a passage in Cicero's third book of laws, from which it has been concluded, that the law of Romulus with regard to the exposing and destroying male children that were remarkably deformed, was confirmed by a constitution of the twelve tables (*f*). A very learned writer has taken notice of a remarkable passage in Terence, from which it appears, that this inhuman custom of exposing and destroying children, especially females, was not uncommon, even among parents of the best characters. After having observed, that "of all the moral painters, Terence is he who seems to have copied human nature most exactly," he adds, that "yet his man of universal benevolence, whom he draws with so much life in that masterly stroke, *Homo sum, humani nihil à me alienum puto*, is the same person who commands his wife to expose his newborn daughter, and flies into a passion with her, for having committed that hard task to another, by which means the infant escaped death.—*Si meum imperium exequi voluisses, interemptam oportuit*.—And he [Chremes] characterizes such who had any remains of this natural instinct as persons—*qui neque jus, neque bonum atque æquum sciunt* (*g*).” Such were the sentiments published with applause on the Roman theatre. And it appears from a passage of Seneca, that so late as in his time, it was usual among the Romans

(*e*) Dion. Halic. Roman Antiquities, lib. ii.

(*f*) Cic. de Leg. lib. iii. cap. 8. p. 207. where see Dr. Davis's note.

(*g*) Divine Legation of Moses, vol. I. book i. sect. 4. p. 58. marg. note, edit. 4th.

to destroy weak and deformed children. "Portentosos fœtus extinguiamus: liberos quoque, si debiles monstrosique editi sunt, mergimus (*h*)."

The cruelty of the Lacedæmonians towards their slaves has been taken notice of. The laws and customs of the Romans, with respect to them, were little better. It was not unusual for the masters to put their old, sick, and infirm slaves into an island in the Tyber, where they left them to perish. And so far did some of them carry their luxury and wantonness, as to drown their slaves in the fish-ponds, that they might be devoured by the fish, to make their flesh more delicate (*i*). The custom of gladiatory shows, which obtained universally among the Romans, even when they were famous for the politer arts, and were thought to give a pattern of good government to other nations, was also contrary to the rules of humanity. They were exhibited at the funerals of great and rich men, and on many other occasions, by the Roman consuls, prætors, ædiles, senators, knights, priests, and almost all that bore great offices in the state, as well as by the emperors; and in general by all that had a mind to make an interest with the people, who were extravagantly fond of those kind of shows. Not only the men, but the women ran eagerly after them, who were, by the prevalence of custom, so far divested of that compassion and softness which is natural to the sex, that they took a pleasure in seeing them kill one another, and only desired that they should fall genteelly, and in an agreeable attitude. Such was the frequency of those shows, and so great the number of men that were killed on these occasions, that Lipsius says, no war caused such slaughter of mankind,

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(*h*) Sen. de Ira, lib. i. cap. 15.

(*i*) See L'Esprit, disc. 2. chap. 24.

as did these sports of pleasure, throughout the several provinces of the vast Roman empire.

That odious and unnatural vice, which (as has been shewn) prevailed so much in Greece, was also common among the Romans, especially in the latter times of their state. Many passages might be produced from their poets, which plainly refer to it. To which I shall add what a learned author observes, that "Cicero introduces, without any mark of disapprobation, Cotta, a man of the first rank and genius, freely and familiarly owning to other Romans of the same quality, that worse than beastly vice, as practised by himself, and quoting the authority of antient philosophers in vindication of it (*k*)."

It appears from what Seneca says, in his 95th epistle, that in his time it was practised at Rome openly, and without shame. He there speaks of flocks and troops of boys, distinguished by their colours and nations; and that great care was taken to train them up for that detestable employment (*l*).

It is not necessary to add any thing more to shew, that among the Greeks and Romans, the most celebrated nations in the antient Pagan world, their laws and constitutions, though in many respects excellent, were far from exhibiting a

(*k*) Dr. Tailour's Notes and Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans, on chap. i. 26. "Quotus enim quisque formosus est? Athenis cum essem, e gregibus Ephæborum vix singuli reperiebantur. Video quid subriseris. Sed tamen ita se res habet. Deinde nobis, qui concedentibus philosophis adolescentulis delectamur, etiam vitia sæpe jucunda sunt." And he immediately after mentions Alcæus's being pleased with a blemish in the boy he was in love with; and Q. Catulus's being in love with Roscius, who had distorted eyes. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. i. cap. 28.

(*l*) "Puerorum infelicium greges, agmina exoletorum, per nationes coloresque descripta," &c. Ep. 95.



proper rule of morals to guide the people: they failed in very important instances: and some of the customs, which at length became very prevalent among them, were of a most immoral nature and tendency, and shewed them to be sunk into an amazing corruption and depravity of manners.

It may not be improper, on this occasion, to take notice of the Chinese, who have been mightily extolled for their antiquity, the extent of their empire, the wisdom and excellency of their laws and constitutions, and the goodness of their morals. A noted author, who has distinguished himself by asserting the clearness and sufficiency of the Law and Religion of nature in opposition to Revelation, lays a particular stress upon this. He represents "the infidels of China (as he calls them) as having the preference to Christians in regard to all moral virtues." And he tells us, from the famous Mr. Leibnitz, that "such is our growing corruption, that it may almost seem necessary to send some Chinese missionaries to teach us the use and practice of Natural Theology, as we send missionaries to them to teach them revealed Religion (*m*)."

But if we take their laws and constitutions in the most advantageous light, it must be owned, indeed, that they are well calculated for preserving external public order and decency, and for the regulation of the civil polity, but are altogether insufficient to furnish a complete rule of morals, or to lead men into the practice of real piety and virtue, considered in its just extent. F. Navarette, who lived many years in China, and was well acquainted with their language, their laws, and books, and who seems to have given an honest and impartial account of them (*n*), says, that "he believes

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(*m*) Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 366, 367. edit. 8vo.

(*n*) I do not find that Father Navarette's name appears in the list of the authors, whose names are prefixed to F. Du Halde's

the outward behaviour is not taken care of so much in any part of the world, as it is in China: that whatever they do or say is so contrived, that it may have a good appearance, please all, and offend none: and that doubtless that nation excels all others in outward modesty, gravity, good words, courtesy, and civility (o).” Yet what he says of them in several parts of his book, gives one a very disadvantageous idea of their morals. He represents the sin against nature as extremely common among them; and that in the time of the former Chinese emperors, there were public stews of this kind at Pequin, though not allowed by the Tartars (p). That they do not look upon drunkenness to be a crime (q). That every one takes as many concubines as he can keep (r). That many of the common people pawn their wives, and that some lend them for a month, or more, or less, according as they agree (s). That there are many things in China which make matrimony void, some of them very trifling. He quotes a book of great authority among them, in which it is said, concerning the antient wise men of China, who are there celebrated as men of greater sincerity and virtue than the moderns, that they turned away their wives, because the house was

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History of China, and out of whose accounts he compiled his history. But as he found fault with the wrong and partial accounts given by several authors of the society, I suppose it was thought proper to take no notice of him; though he well deserved to have been mentioned among the best of those who have given accounts of China.

(o) See Navarette’s Account of the Empire of China, book ii. chap. 6. p. 122, 123. in the first volume of Churchill’s Collection.

(p) Ibid. book i. chap. 13. p. 29. and book ii. p. 68.

(q) Ibid. book i. chap. 14.

(r) Ibid. book ii. chap 7. p. 68.

(s) Ibid.

full of smoke, or because they frightened the dog with their disagreeable noise. And that the antients dissolved the knot of matrimony without a word speaking. In the same book it is determined, that when the wife is turned off, the husband may marry another (*t*). F. Navarette farther observes, that the Chinese sell their sons and daughters when they please, and do it frequently (*u*). But what is still worse, very many of them, rich as well as poor, when they are delivered of daughters, stifle and kill them. Those who are more tender-hearted leave them under a vessel, where they let them die in great misery: of which he gives a most affecting instance to his own knowledge. And he says it was the common opinion that there were about ten thousand female children murdered every year within the precincts of the City Lao Ki, where he lived some time. "How many then (says he) must we imagine perished throughout the whole empire (*x*)?" Yet, he says, "all the sects among them, except that of the learned, think it a sin to kill living creatures: they plead humanity and compassion, thinking it a cruel thing to take that life which they cannot give. But it is very well worth remarking (says he) that they should endeavour to shew themselves merciful to beasts, yet murder their own daughters." He adds, that "in India they have hospitals for all sorts of irrational creatures, and yet they let men die without assisting them in their sickness (*y*)." Many have talked of the brotherly affection and benevolence of the Chinese towards one another; but it appears from the same writer,

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(*t*) Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, book ii. chap. 7. p. 67.

(*u*) Ibid. book i. chap. 20. p. 47.

(*x*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 10. p. 77.

(*y*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 10. p. 77.

that though they carry a fair appearance, and “are exquisite at concealing the mortal hatred they bear any man for several years, yet, when an opportunity offers, they give full vent to it. It often happens, that in law suits, the defendant hangs himself, only to ruin and avenge himself of the plaintiff: for when he is hanged, all his kindred repair to the judge, complaining that he hanged himself to avoid the trouble and vexation the plaintiff put him to, having no other remedy left him. Then all join against the plaintiff, and the judge among them; and they never give over, till they ruin him and his family (z).” Father Trigaltius, and from him Cornelius à Lapide, say, concerning the Chinese, that “they wonderfully follow the track of nature and reason, and are courteous, and apt to learn, as well as ingenious and great politicians, and therefore very capable of Christian wisdom,” &c. F. Navarette, who mentions this, remarks upon it, that “if their being so addicted to superstitions, sodomy, fraud, lying, pride, covetousness, sensuality, and other vices, is following the course of nature and reason, then that father was in the right (a).” To what has been produced from F. Navarette, I would add, that an author of great reputation for political knowledge has observed, that “the Chinese, whose whole life is entirely governed by the established rites, are the most void of com-

(z) Navarette’s Account of the Empire of China, book i. chap. 20. p. 47. What Navarette here says concerning the litigiousness of the Chinese, is confirmed by the testimony of the Jesuits, who compiled the *Scientia Sinesis Latine exposita*. They observe that there is an infinite number of law suits in China, and every where a thousand arts of cheating, of which all the tribunals are full. “*Infinitus litium et litigantium in Chinâ hodie est numerus; mille passim fallendi fingendive, artes, quibus tribunalia omnia plena sunt.*” *Scient. Sin. lib. i. p. 12.*

(a) *Ibid.* book v. p. 173.



mon honesty of any people upon earth;—le peuple le plus fourbe de la terre;” and that the laws, though they do not allow them to rob or to spoil by violence, yet permit them to cheat and to defraud (*b*). Agreeable to this is the character given of them in Lord Anson’s Voyages, where there are striking instances of the general disposition that is among them to commit all kinds of fraud.

It were easy to produce several other laws and customs of different nations contrary to the rules of morality. Some nations there have been, among whom theft and robbery were accounted honourable. Others gave a full indulgence by law to all manner of impurity and licentiousness, both in men and women. Others, as the Persians, allowed the most incestuous mixtures. And there were several nations, among whom it was usual to expose and destroy their nearest friends and relatives, and even their parents, when they grew old and very sick, esteeming those to be most miserable that died a natural death (*c*). Eusebius gives several other instances of absurd and immoral laws and customs, which obtained among many people before the light of the

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(*b*) *L’Esprit des Loix*, vol. I. liv. xix. chap. 17. p. 437. et *ibid.* chap. 20. p. 440, 441. edit. Edinb.

(*c*) The author of a late periodical paper, published at Paris, entitled, *Le Conservateur*, pleads in favour of the laws of those nations, which ordered old and infirm persons to be put to death. He pretends, that there is nothing in this but what is conformable to reason, though he owns it is not reconcilable to the Gospel. And he thinks it would be fit and reasonable, to determine by law the term beyond which persons should not be suffered to live. *Le Conservateur* for March 1757, as cited by the Abbé Gauchet, in his *Lettres Critiques*. An instance this, among many others that might be mentioned, of the extravagances men are apt to fall into, through a high opinion of their own reason.

Gospel shone amongst them. But he observes, that no sooner did any of them embrace Christianity, but they abandoned those laws and customs, which nothing could prevail with them to do before. And this he justly mentions as a proof of the happy effects produced by the Gospel, in reforming the manners of men (*d*).

The same learned father has a long extract from Bardeanes, an eminent antient writer, concerning the various customs and laws in different nations, partly written, and partly unwritten, some of which were good and laudable, others of an immoral nature and tendency. It is too long to be transcribed here, but may be seen in the sixth book of Eusebius's *Evangelical Preparation*, cap. 10. p. 175. et seq. The reader may also consult Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhon. Hypotyp.* lib. iii. cap. 24. and a modern author, who has made a large collection of absurd and shameful laws and customs in several nations, antient and modern, especially such as tend to encourage all manner of lewdness and debauchery (*e*). It is easy to observe that this last mentioned writer enlarges upon some of those laws and customs which are contrary to all the rules of modesty and purity, in a manner which shews that he is far from disapproving them, and seems rather to recommend them as models of a wise legislation. We may see by this what fine systems of legislation might be expected from some of those, who make the highest pretences to an extraordinary sagacity; and what an advantage it is, not to be left merely to what men's boasted reason, which is too often guided and influenced by their passions, would be apt to dictate in morals.

I shall conclude what relates to the laws and customs of

(*d*) *Præpar. Evangel.* lib. i. cap. 4. p. 11, 12. edit. Paris.

(*e*) *L'Esprit*, tome I. disc. 2. chap. 14 et 15,

the Pagan nations, with observing, that Lord Bolingbroke, who, as hath been already hinted, seems to lay the principal stress on human laws, as furnishing the most effectual means for promoting and securing the practice of virtue, yet has thought fit to own, that “the law of nature has been blended with many absurd and contradictory laws in all ages and countries, as well as with customs, which, if they were independent on laws, have obtained the force of laws (*f*).” The same noble writer, who frequently represents the law of nature as universally clear and obvious to all mankind, has made this remarkable acknowledgment, that “the law of nature is hid from our sight by all the variegated clouds of civil laws and customs. Some gleams of true light may be seen through them, but they render it a dubious light, and it can be no better to those who have the keenest sight, till those interpositions are removed (*g*).” It may not be improper here to add a passage or two from a celebrated antient, relating to civil laws. Cicero declares, that “the commands and prohibitions of human laws have not a sufficient force, either to engage men to right actions, or avert them from bad ones.—*Intelligi sic oportet, jussa ac vetita populorum vim non habere ad rectè facta vocandi, et a peccatis avocandi* (*h*).” And he pronounces, that “it would be the greatest folly to imagine, that all those things are just which are contained in popular institutions and laws.—*Illud stultissimum existimare omnia justa esse, quæ sita sunt in populorum institutis aut legibus* (*i*).”

Thus it appears, with great evidence, that the civil laws

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(*f*) Bolingbroke's Works, vol. V. p. 15. edit. 4to.

(*g*) Ibid. vol. V. p. 105. edit. 4to.

(*h*) De Leg. lib. ii. cap. 4.

(*i*) Lib. i. cap. 15.

and constitutions in the Pagan world were far from affording a safe and certain rule, which might be depended upon, for the direction of the people in moral duty.

As to the mysteries of which a very eminent writer has made a beautiful representation, as an excellent expedient contrived by the legislators and civil magistrates, for reclaiming the people from their idolatry and polytheism, and engaging them to a life of the strictest virtue, I need not here add any thing to what is offered on this subject in the former volume (*k*). It is there shewn, that there is no sufficient reason to think that the mysteries were intended to detect the error of the vulgar polytheism, but rather, on the contrary, by striking shows and representations, to create a greater awe and veneration for the religion of their country. And as to morals, notwithstanding the high pretensions of some Pagan writers, especially after Christianity had made some progress, it does not appear, that the original design of them went farther, than the humanizing and civilizing the people, and encouraging them to the practice of those virtues, and deterring them from those vices, which more immediately affect society. It will scarce, I believe, be pretended, that admitting the most favourable account of the mysteries, the people were there instructed in a complete body of morals. But the truth is, there were great defects and faults in the original constitution of them, which naturally gave occasion to corruptions and abuses, which began early, and continued long; so that it is to be feared, the mysteries, as they were managed, greatly contributed to that amazing depravation of manners, which, like a deluge, overspread the Pagan world. It is observed by the celebrated author above referred to, that "God, in punishment

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(*k*) See vol. I. chap. viii. and ix.



‘for their turning his Truth into a lie,’ suffered their mysteries, which they erected for a school of virtue, to degenerate into an odious sink of vice and immorality, giving them up unto all uncleanness and vile affections (1).”

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(1) Divine Legation of Moses, vol. I. book ii. sect. 4. p. 196. marginal note, edit. 4th.

## CHAPTER V.

Concerning morality as taught by the antient Heathen philosophers. Some of them said excellent things concerning moral virtue, and their writings might in several respects be of great use. But they could not furnish a perfect rule of morals, that had sufficient certainty, clearness, and authority. No one philosopher, or sect of philosophers, can be absolutely depended upon as a proper guide in matters of morality. Nor is a complete system of morals to be extracted from the writings of them all collectively considered. The vanity of such an attempt shewn. Their sentiments, how excellent soever, could not properly pass for laws to mankind.

**THOUGH** the civil laws and constitutions, or those customs which obtained the force of laws, in the Heathen world, could not furnish out a rule of morality, which might be depended upon, to guide men to the true knowledge and practice of moral duty in its just extent; yet it may be alleged, that the instructions and precepts of the philosophers were, if duly attended to, sufficient for that purpose. This is what many have insisted on, to shew that there was no need of an extraordinary Divine Revelation to give men a complete rule of moral duty. It is well known what praises many of the antients have bestowed on philosophy, and that they have particularly extolled its great usefulness and excellency with regard to morals. Cicero has several remarkable passages to this purpose (*m*). He says

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(*m*) “ *Cultura animi philosophia est, hæc extrahit vitia radicibus: est profectò animi medicina philosophia, medetur animis: ab eâ, si et boni et beati volumus esse, omnia adjumenta et auxilia petemus benè beatèque vivendi: vitiorum peccatorumque nostrorum, omnis à philosophia petenda correctio est. O vitæ philosophia dux! virtutis indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum! Quid non modo nos, sed omnino vita hominum, sine te esse potuisset! Tu inventrix legum, tu magistra morum et disciplinæ*

that "philosophy is the culture of the mind, and plucketh up vice by the roots: that it is the medicine of the soul, and healeth the minds of men: that from thence, if we would be good and happy, we may draw all proper helps and assistances for leading virtuous and happy lives: that the correction of all our vices and sins is to be sought for from philosophy." And he breaks forth into that rapturous encomium upon it: "O philosophy, the guide of life! the searcher out of virtue, and expeller of vice! What should we be, nay, what would the human life be without thee! Thou wast the inventress of laws, the mistress or teacher of manners and discipline. To thee we flee: from thee we beg assistance. And one day spent according to thy precepts is preferable to an immortality spent in sin." Seneca says, that "philosophy is the study of virtue (*n*)." And some of the moderns have come little behind the antients, in the admiration they have expressed for the Heathen moral philosophy.

I am far from endeavouring to detract from the praises which are justly due to the antient philosophers and moralists among the Pagans. Admirable passages are to be found in their writings. They speak nobly concerning the dignity and beauty of virtue, and the tendency it hath to promote the perfection and happiness of the human nature: and concerning the turpitude and deformity of vice, and the misery that attends it. They give useful and excellent directions as to many particular virtues, and shew the reasons upon

fuisti. Ad te confugimus: à te opem petemus. Est autem unus dies benè et ex præceptis tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati anteponendus." See Cicero Tuscul. Disput. lib. ii. cap. 4 et 5. lib. iii. cap. 3. lib. iv. cap. 38. but especially *ibid.* lib. v. cap. 2.

(*n*) "Philosophia studium virtutis est." Sen. epist. 89. et epist. 90.

which they are founded, in a manner which tends to recommend them to the esteem and practice of mankind. And I doubt not some of them were useful instruments under the direction and assistance of Divine Providence, for preserving among men an esteem and approbation of virtue, for strengthening and improving their moral sense, and giving them, in many instances, a clearer discernment of the moral reasons and differences of things.

But it will by no means follow from this, that therefore mankind stood in no need of a Divine Revelation, to set before them a clear and certain rule of duty, in its just extent, and enforce it upon them by a Divine Authority. It hath been confidently asserted, by those that extol what they call Natural Religion in opposition to Revelation, that "there is no one moral virtue, which has not been taught, explained and proved by the Heathen philosophers, both occasionally and purposely." And that "there is no moral precept in the whole Gospel, which was not taught by the philosophers (o)." The same thing has been said by other writers of a different character, and who assert the Divine Original and Authority of the Gospel Revelation. The learned Dr. Meric Casaubon, in his preface to his translation of Antoninus's Meditations, expresses himself thus: "I must needs say, that if we esteem that natural, which natural men of best account, by the mere strength of human reason, have taught and taken upon them to maintain as just and reasonable, I know not any evangelical precept or duty, belonging to a Christian's practice \* (even the harshest, and those

(o) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 205, 206. 218. Edit. 4to.

(\*) I cannot but regard it as a rash thing in any Christian Divine to say, as Dr. Casaubon here does, that "there is not one evangelical precept or duty belonging to a Christian's practice"



that seem to ordinary men most contrary to flesh and blood not excepted) but upon due search and examination will prove of that nature." In like-manner, another learned and ingenious writer has lately asserted, that "there is not any one principle, or any one practice of morality, which may not be known by Natural Reason without Revelation. By Reason we may come at a certainty of the existence of God, and of his Providence, his Justice, Mercy, and Truth: by that we may trace out our duty to him, and may discover a future state of rewards and punishments: by that we may come at the knowledge of such truths as relate to our neighbours, and the corresponding duties to them: what we are to do in social life; how we are to behave towards go-

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but what natural men, by the mere strength of human reason, have taught and taken upon them to maintain as just and reasonable; since all that believe the Gospel must own, that there is a part of duty which necessarily enters into the evangelical morality, and belongs to the Christian practice, which yet cannot be pretended to have been taught by the antient Pagan Moralists; and that is, that part of Christian practice which immediately ariseth from the discoveries made to us in the Gospel of the Work of our Redemption: e. g. the duties of Love, Affiance, Subjection, and Obedience, which we owe to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and which are of such importance, that the Christian life is represented as a living to him who died for us and rose again. To which it may be added, that the living by that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, and the seeking and minding the things which are above, did not, in any of the Pagan systems of morality, before the coming of our Saviour, necessarily enter into a good man's character; whereas it must be now acknowledged to be essential to the Christian life, and a necessary branch of Gospel holiness. Some other instances of evangelical duty will come to be considered afterwards, which were not prescribed by the best moralists among the antient Pagans.

vernors, and what obedience is to be paid in the civil state: wherein true happiness consists, and what it is that must lead to it; and what we ought to do in our private relations. These and such like points may be traced out by Natural Reason; nor do I know of any one point of duty towards God or man, but what reason will suggest, and supply us with proper motives to do it (*p*).” He afterwards observes, that “as the powers of reason are sufficient in themselves to discover all and every duty, and likewise to discover proper and sufficient motives to do them, Revelation may add many more; and if so, it must be deemed by them that have it a singular advantage (*q*).” We see here, that this learned writer asserts, that the powers of reason alone, without any assistance from Revelation, are sufficient to discover all and every duty towards God, our neighbours, and ourselves, and also to supply proper and sufficient motives to do them: and all that he leaves to Divine Revelation, is not to make a discovery of any part of our duty, but only to furnish some additional motives to duty, besides what the light of our own unassisted reason is able of itself to discover. I readily allow, that if Revelation did no more than this, it would yet be of great advantage to those that have it, and what they ought to be very thankful to the Divine Goodness for. But I cannot think this is all the benefit we have by Divine Revelation, and that it gives us no knowledge or information with respect to any part of the duty required of us, but what the light of Natural Reason was able clearly and certainly to discover, and actually did discover by its own unassisted strength. I join with the learned Doctor in the declaration he makes, that “there

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(*p*) Dr. Sykes’s *Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 108, 109.

(*q*) *Ibid.* p. 110.

can be no surer way of knowing what Reason can discover, and what not, than by examining what proficiency was actually made in moral knowledge, by those who lived where Revelation was unknown (*r*).” Let us therefore put it to this issue. But then it is to be observed, that there is one capital mistake, which runs through all that this very ingenious and able writer, and others of the same sentiments, have advanced on this head; and that is, that they take it for granted, that whatever the Heathen moralists and philosophers have taught with regard to religion, or any part of duty, they discovered it merely by an effort of their own reason, without any light derived from Revelation at all. But this is impossible for them to prove. There is just ground to believe, as has been shewn, that the knowledge of the one true God, the Creator of the World, and of the main principles of religion and morality, were originally communicated by Divine Revelation to the first parents and ancestors of the human race, and from them transmitted to their descendants; some traces of which still continued, and were never utterly extinguished in the Heathen world. Besides which, the chief articles of moral duty were delivered and promulgated with a most amazing solemnity, by an express Divine Revelation, to a whole nation, and committed to writing, before any of those philosophers, who are so much admired, published their moral discourses. And it is well known, that many of those great men travelled into countries bordering upon Judea, in order to gain knowledge, especially in matters of religion and morality. And those of that nation were pretty early spread abroad in several parts of the Pagan world. This learned author himself ac-

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(*r*) Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connexion of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 109.

knowledges, that the wisest men in Greece travelled into Egypt, that they might come at the knowledge of the unity of God; so that they did not attain merely by the force of their own unassisted reason, to the knowledge of that which he himself affirms to be the fundamental principle of all morality (*s*). To which it may be added, that some of the most eminent of those philosophers were sensible of the great need they stood in of a Divine Assistance, to lead them into the right knowledge of religion and their duty, and frequently take notice of antient and venerable traditions, to which they refer, and which they suppose to have been of divine original.

But if we should grant that they had all, which they taught in relation to religion and morals, purely by their own reason, it is far from being true that there is not any one evangelical precept, or point of moral duty, taught and enforced in the Gospel, that was not taught by the Heathen philosophers. I shall at present only instance in one, which is of very great importance: it is that precept mentioned by our Saviour, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matt. iv. 10. The philosophers were universally wrong, both in conforming themselves, and urging it as a duty upon the people to conform in their religious worship, to the rites and laws of their several countries, by which polytheism was established, and the public worship was directed to a multiplicity of deities. This was a grand defect, and spread confusion and error through that part of duty which relates to the exercises of piety towards God, which some of the philosophers themselves acknowledged to be an essential branch of mo-

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(*s*) Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 383.



rality. I shall have occasion afterwards, in the course of this work, to take notice of some other evangelical precepts which were not taught by the philosophers.

But, not to insist upon this at present, I would observe, that it cannot reasonably be pretended, that a complete system of morality, in its just extent, and without any material defect, is to be found in the writings of any one philosopher, or sect of philosophers. The utmost that can be alleged with any shew of reason is, that there is no one moral duty prescribed in the Gospel, but which may possibly be found in the writings of some or other of the ancient Pagan philosophers. But if this were so, what use or force could this be supposed to have with respect to the people, or the bulk of mankind? Must they be put to seek out their duty amidst the scattered volumes of philosophers and moralists, and to pick out, every man for himself, that which seemeth to him to be the best in each of them? Or, if any one philosopher should undertake to do it for the people, and select out of them all a system of morals, which in his opinion would be a complete rule of duty, upon what foundation could this pass for a code of laws, obligatory on all mankind, or even on any particular nation or person, unless enforced by some superior authority? Mr. Locke has expressed this so happily, that I cannot give my sense of it better than in his words. Speaking of moral precepts, he saith, "Supposing they may be picked up here and there, some from Solon and Bias in Greece, others from Tully in Italy, and to complete the whole, let Confucius as far as China be consulted, and Anacharsis the Scythian contribute his share; what will all this do to give the world a complete morality, that may be to mankind the unquestionable rule of life and manners? Did the saying of Aristippus or Confucius give it an authority? Was Zeno a lawgiver to mankind? If not, what he or any other philosopher delivered

was but a saying of his. Mankind might hearken to it or reject it as they pleased, or as suited their interests, passions, inclinations, or humours, if they were under no obligation (*t*)."

Let us suppose that the lessons and instructions given by philosophers and moralists, with respect to any particular duty, appear to be fit and reasonable, this is not alone sufficient to give them a binding force. A thing may appear to be agreeable to reason, and yet there may be inducements and motives on the other side, which may keep the mind suspended, except there be an higher authority to turn the scale. The observation which Grotius applies to a particular case, holds of many others. That "that which has less utility is not merely for that reason unlawful: and it may happen that a more considerable utility may be opposed to that which we have in view, whatever we suppose it to be.—*Neque enim quod minus utile est statim illicitum est, adde quod accidere potest; ut huic qualicunque utilitati alia major utilitas repugnet (u).*" In matters of practice, a thing may seem to be reasonable, and yet cannot be proved to be certainly and necessarily obligatory. So much may be said in opposition to it, as may very much weaken the force of what was offered to recommend it: and a prevailing appetite or worldly interest has often a great influence on the mind, and hinders it from passing an impartial judgment. But a divine revelation, clearly ascertaining and determining our duty in those instances, in plain and express terms, and enforcing it by Divine Authority, and by sanctions of rewards and punishments, would decide the point, and leave no room to doubt of the obligation. A noble author, speak-

(*t*) Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity. See his Works, vol. II. p. 533. edit. 3d.

(*u*) Grotius de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 5. sect. 12.

ing of the philosophers, saith, that "some few particular men may discover, explain, and press upon others the moral obligations incumbent upon all, and our moral state be little improved (*x*).” And therefore he lays the principal stress upon the institutions of civil laws and governments, and the various punishments which human justice inflicts to enforce those laws. But how little fitted those institutions are to enforce morality and virtue, taken in its true notion and proper extent, has been already shewn. The greatest men of antiquity seem to have been sensible, that neither bare reason and philosophy, nor a mere human authority, is sufficient to bind laws upon mankind. Accordingly, the last mentioned author, who was eminent for his political knowledge, has observed, that "the most celebrated philosophers and lawgivers did enforce their doctrines and laws by a Divine Authority, and call in an higher principle to the assistance of philosophy and bare reason. He instances in Zoroaster, Hostanes, the Magi, Minos, Numa, Pythagoras, and all those who framed and formed religions and commonwealths, who made these pretensions, and passed for men divinely inspired and commissioned (*y*).” And these pretensions, though not vouched by sufficient credentials, gave their laws and institutions a force with the people, which otherwise they would not have had. But as the several sects of philosophers in succeeding ages, among the Greeks and Romans, only stood upon the foot of their own reasoning, and could not pretend to a Divine Authority, this very much weakened the effect of their moral lessons and precepts. And, indeed, the best and wisest among them acknowledged on several occasions, the need they stood in of a Divine Revelation and Instruction. That the

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(*x*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 480.

(*y*) Ibid. p. 227.

philosophers in general had no great weight with the people, appears from what is observed in the first volume of this work, chap. 10. To which it may be added, that Cicero, after having given the highest encomiums on philosophy, especially as the best guide in morals, adds, that “it is so far from being esteemed and praised, according to what it merits of human life, that it is by the most of mankind neglected, and by many even reproached.—*Philosophia quidem tantum abest, ut proinde ac de hominum est vitâ merita, laudetur, ut à plerisque neglecta, à multis etiam vituperetur* (z).”

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(z) *Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 2. p. 344. edit. Davis.*



## CHAPTER VI.

Many of the philosophers were fundamentally wrong in the first principles of morals. They denied that there are any moral differences of things founded in nature and reason, and resolved them wholly into human laws and customs. Observations on those philosophers who made man's chief good consist in pleasure, and proposed this as the highest end of morals, without any regard to a Divine Law. The moral system of Epicurus considered. His high pretences to virtue examined. The inconsistency of his principles shewn, and that, if pursued to their genuine consequences, they are really destructive of all virtue and good morals.

**MORAL** philosophy, properly speaking, had its beginning among the Greeks with Socrates. Cicero says, "he was the first that called down philosophy from heaven, and introduced it into cities and private houses, and obliged it to make life and manners the subject of its enquiries.—*Primus philosophiam devocavit à cælo, et in urbibus collocavit, et in domus etiam introduxit, et cægit de vitâ et moribus, rebusque bonis et malis quærere (a).*" Not that he was the first philosopher that ever treated of morals, but, as the same great man elsewhere observes, Socrates was the first that, quitting abstruse disquisitions into natural things, and curious speculations about the heavenly bodies (which had principally employed all the philosophers before him) as being things too remote from our knowledge, or if known, of little use to direct men's conduct, brought philosophy into common life, and made virtues and vices, things good and evil, the only object of his philosophy (*b*). From his time the science of morals was cultivated. All the different

(a) Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 4.

(b) Academic. lib. i. cap. 4.

sects of philosophers treated of morality, but they went upon very different principles.

Some of the philosophers were wrong in the very fundamental principles of morals. And since the foundation was wrong, they could not build upon it a proper system, nor be depended upon for leading mankind into right notions of their duty. Such were those who maintained, that nothing is just or unjust by nature, but only by law and custom. This was the opinion, as Laertius informs us, of Theodorus, Archelaus, Aristippus, and others. This way also went Pyrrho, and all the sceptics, who denied that any thing is in itself, and by its own nature, honest or dishonest, base or honourable, but only by virtue of the laws and customs which have obtained among men: for which they are deservedly exposed by Epictetus (*c*). Plato represents it as a fashionable opinion, which very much prevailed in his time, and was maintained and propagated by many that were esteemed wise men and philosophers, "That the things which are accounted just, are not so by nature: for that men are always differing about them, and making new constitutions: and as often as they are thus constituted they obtain authority, being made just by art and by the laws, not by any natural force or virtue (*d*)."

Thus did many of the philosophers resolve all moral obligations into merely human laws and constitutions, making them the only measure of right and wrong, of good and evil.

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(*c*) Epictet. Dissert. lib. ii. cap. 20. sect 6. Our modern sceptics, as well as the ancient, set themselves to shew the uncertainty of morals. Mr. Bayle has many passages which look that way. And this particularly is what the author of a late remarkable tract, intituled, *Le Pyrrhonisme du Sage*, has attempted to shew.

(*d*) Plato de Leg. lib. x. Oper. p. 666. C. edit. Lugd.

So that if the people had a mind to be instructed what they should do or forbear, they sent them to the laws of their several countries, and allowed them to do whatsoever was not forbidden by those laws. And in this those philosophers agreed with the politicians. When Alcibiades asked Pericles, What is law? he answered, That all those are laws which are prescribed with the consent and approbation of the people, declaring what things ought to be done, or ought not to be done: and intimated, that whatsoever things are appointed by legal authority, are to be regarded as good, and not evil (*e*). And indeed Socrates himself, and the most celebrated philosophers and moralists, though they acknowledged a real foundation in nature for the moral differences of things, yet every where inculcate it as a necessary ingredient in a good man's character, to obey without reserve the laws of his country. But what uncertain rules of morality the civil laws and constitutions are, and that they might often lead men into vicious and immoral practices, sufficiently appears from what hath been already observed.

Some of the philosophers, as Laertius tells us of Theodorus, declared without disguise, that "a wise man might, upon a fit occasion, commit theft, adultery, and sacrilege, for that none of these things are base in their own nature, if that opinion concerning them be taken away, which was agreed upon for the sake of restraining fools." Τὸν σπερδαῖον κλέψειν τε καὶ μοιχέυσειν, καὶ ἱεροσυλήσειν ἐν καιρῷ, μηδὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν αἰσχρῶς φύσει, τῆς ἐπ' αὐταῖς δόξης ἀιρομένης, ἢ σύγκειται ἕνεκα τῆς τῶν ἀφρόνων συνοχῆς (*f*). Aristippus, who also held that "nothing is by nature just, or honourable, or base, but by law and

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(*e*) Xenoph. Memor. Socr. lib. i. cap. 2. sect. 42.

(*f*) Diog. Laert. lib. ii. segm. 99.

custom," yet is pleased to declare, that a prudent man will not do an absurd thing, *οὐδὲν ἀτοπον*, any thing out of the common usage, because of the dangers it might bring upon him, and the censures it might expose him to (*g*). And how weak a tie this would be to a man that had nothing else to restrain him, I need not take pains to shew. It is evident that, upon this scheme of things, there can be no such thing as conscience, or a fixed notion of virtue. It opens a wide door to licentiousness, and to the perpetrating all manner of vice and wickedness without scruple, if they can but escape public notice, and the punishments of human judicatories. What fine instructors in morals were those philosophers who taught such maxims!

Among those antient philosophers who were wrong in the fundamental principles of morals, they may be justly reckoned who laid this down as a foundation of their moral system, that a man's chief good consists in sensual pleasure, and that this is the supreme end he is to propose to himself, to which every thing else should be subordinate. There is a remarkable passage of Cicero in his first book of laws relating to this subject, in which he represents pleasure as an enemy within us, "which being intimately complicated with all the senses, lays all kinds of snares for our souls: that it hath a semblance of good or happiness, but is really the author of evils: and that being corrupted by its blandishments, we do not sufficiently discern the things which are in their own nature good, because they want that sweetness and tickling or itching kind of sensation it affords.—*Animis omnes tenduntur insidiæ ab eâ, quæ penitus omni sensu implicata insidet imitatrix boni voluptas, malorum autem autor omnium, cujus blanditiis corrupti quæ naturâ bona sunt,*

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(*g*) Diog. Laert. lib. ii. segm. 93.



quia dulcedine hâc et scabie carent, non cernimus satis (h).” And again, speaking of those who stiffly maintained that pleasure is the greatest good, he says, that, “this seems to be rather the languages of beasts than of men:—quæ quidem mihi vox pecudum videtur esse non hominum (i).” Aris-

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(h) De Leg. lib. i. cap. 17.

(i) De Parad. cap. 1. Some of our modern admirers of reason differ very much from Cicero in their sentiments on this subject. The author of *Les six Discours sur l’Homme*, said to be written by the celebrated M. de Voltaire, who sets up for a zealous advocate for natural religion, says, that “nature attentive to fulfil our desires, calleth us to God by the voice of pleasures.”

“La nature attentive a remplir nos desirs,  
Nous rappelle au Dieu par le voix des plaisirs.”

At this rate, men will be apt to regard all their inclinations and appetites, as the significations of the will of God concerning the the duties he requireth of them. This is also the prevailing maxim of the author of the famous book *De l’Esprit*, who observes, that “since pleasure is the only object which men seek after, all that is necessary to inspire them with the love of virue is to imitate nature. Pleasure pronounces what nature wills, and grief or pain shews what nature forbids, and man readily obeys it. The love of pleasure, against which men, more respectable for their probity than their judgment, have declaimed, is a rein, by which the passions of particular persons may be always directed to the general good.—Si le plaisir est l’unique objet de la recherche des hommes, pour lui inspirer l’amour de la vertu, il ne faut qu’imiter la nature: le plaisir en annonce les volontés, le douleur les defenses; et l’homme lui obeît avec docilité. L’amour du plaisir contre lequel se sont elevés des gens d’une probité plus respectable qu’eclaircée, est un frein, avec lequel on peut toujours diriger au bien general les passions des particuliers.” *De l’Esprit*, disc. 3. chap. 16. tome II. p. 67. Amst. And what kind of pleasure he intends, clearly appears from the latter end of the 13th chapter of his 3d discourse, where he says, that “there are only

tippus, and his followers of the Cyrenaic sect, taught this doctrine in the grossest sense, and without disguise. They held corporeal pleasure to be our ultimate end; that pleasure

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two kinds of pleasures: the pleasures of the senses, and the means of obtaining them; which may be ranked among pleasures; because the hope of pleasure is the beginning of pleasure." And this is agreeable to the general scheme of his book, which goes upon this principle, that physical sensibility is the source of all our ideas, and that man is not capable of any other motive to determine him than the pleasures of the senses: and these are all expressly reduced by him to love, the love of women. And he makes the perfection of legislation to consist in exciting men to the noblest actions, by fomenting and gratifying those sensual passions. He says, "If the pleasure of love be the most lively and vigorous of all human pleasures, what a fruitful source of courage is contained in this pleasure? and what ardor for virtue may not the love of women inspire?" Ibid. tome II. disc. 3. chap. 15. p. 51. And accordingly he pleads for gallantry in a nation where luxury is necessary, (and it is well known, that under the name of gallantry, especially in that nation to which this gentleman belongs, is comprehended an unlawful commerce with married women). He thinks, "that it is not agreeable to policy to regard it as a vice in a moral sense: or, if they will call it a vice, it must be acknowledged that there are vices which are useful in certain ages and countries." And to say that those vices are useful in certain countries, is, according to this scheme, to say, that in those countries they are virtues: for he holds, that every action ought to be called virtuous, which is advantageous to the public. "C'est une inconsequence politique que de regarder la galanterie, comme un vice moral: et si l'on veut lui conserver le nom de vice, il faut convenir, qu'il en est d'utiles dans certains siecles, et certains pays." Ibid. tome I. disc. 2. chap. 15. p. 176. et seq.

The author of *Le Discours sur la Vie Heureuse*, printed at the end of *Pensees Philosophiques*, carries it still farther. The design of that whole treatise is to shew, that happiness consists only in sensual pleasure, and in the gratification of the fleshly

which actually moves and strikes the senses: and they roundly affirmed, that the pleasures of the body are much better than those of the soul, and its pains and griefs much worse. See Laert. lib. ii. segm. 87. et 90. Epicurus, who held the same principle, that pleasure is the chief good and highest end of man, endeavoured to explain it so as to shun the odious consequences which are charged upon it. His morality was

appetite, and that wisdom consists in pursuing it. From this principle, that the actual pleasurable sensation of the body is the only true happiness, he draws conclusions worthy of such a principle: that “we ought to take care of the body before the soul; to cultivate the mind only with a view to procure more advantages for the body; to deny ourselves nothing that can give us pleasure; to use nature (by which he means the bodily appetites) as a guide to reason.” It is no wonder that he asserts, that “the law of nature directs us to give up truth to the laws, rather than our bodies; and that it is natural to treat virtue in the same way as truth.—Des lors il faut songer au corps, avant que de songer à l’ame; ne cultiver son ame, que pour procurer plus de commodités à son corps; ne point se priver de ce que fait plaisir; donner à la raison la nature pour guide. La loi de la nature dicte de leur [i. e. aux loix des hommes] livrer plutôt la vérité que nos corps; il est naturel de traiter la vertu comme de la vérité.\*” Such is the morality taught by some of our pretended masters of reason in the present age, who are too wise to be guided by revelation, and express a contempt for those as weak and superstitious persons, who are for governing themselves by its sacred rules. It can hardly be thought too severe a censure to say, that the principal reason for their endeavouring to discard the Gospel is, that they may be free from the restraint it lays upon their sensual and depraved passions, and that they may be left loose in matters of morality, to follow their own inclinations, and to do whatsoever their appetites would prompt them to.

\* Discours sur la Vie Heureuse, à Potsdam 1748. p. 34. See L’Abbé Gauchet Lettres Critiques, tom. i. lettre iv.

highly extolled by some of the antients, and has had very learned apologists among the moderns, some of whom have not scrupled to prefer it to any other of the heathen philosophers. It is necessary, therefore, in considering the systems of the Pagan moralists, to take particular notice of that of Epicurus, that we may see whether it deserves the encomiums which have been so liberally bestowed upon it. And I cannot help thinking, that, whatever plausible appearance it may put on, yet if we take the whole of his scheme together, and impartially consider it in its proper connection and natural consequences, we shall find it destructive of true virtue.

It is evident that there is one essential defect which runs through his whole system of morality, and that is, that it had no regard to the Deity, or to a Divine Authority or Law: the gods he owns (for he does not speak of one Supreme God) were such as lived at ease, and without care, in the extra-mundane spaces, and exercised no inspection over mankind, nor ever concerned themselves about their actions and affairs. There was therefore no room upon his scheme for the exercise of piety towards God, a submission to his authority, and resignation to his will, or for a dependance upon Providence, and a religious regard to the Divine favour and approbation. It is true, that Epicurus writ books about piety and sanctity (*k*), for which he is deservedly ridiculed by Cotta in Cicero (*l*). And Epictetus ob-

(*k*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 27.

(*l*) De nat. Deor. lib. i. cap. 41. It is a little surprising, that so great a man as Gassendus, among the many fine things he says of Epicurus, has thought fit to mention his disinterested piety, and filial affection towards the Divine Nature. What he offers on this head is extremely weak, and is a remarkable instance of what may be often observed, that when learned men



serves concerning the Epicureans, that “they got themselves made priests and prophets of gods, which according to them, had no existence, and consulted the Pythian priestess, only to hear what in their opinion were falsehoods, and interpreted those oracles to others.” This he treats as a monstrous impudent imposture (*m*).

As to that part of morality which relates to the duties we owe to mankind, in this also the scheme of Epicurus, at least if pursued to its genuine consequences, was greatly defective. He taught, that a man is to do every thing for his own sake: that he is to make his own happiness his chief end, and to do all in his power to secure and preserve it. And he makes happiness to consist in the mind’s being freed from trouble, and the body from pain. Accordingly, it is one of his maxims, that “business and cares do not consist with happiness.”—Ὅτι συμφανῶσι πραγματεῖαι καὶ φροντίδες μακαριότητι (*n*). According to this scheme of principle, no man ought to do any thing that would expose him to trouble and pain, or give him disturbance: and therefore he ought not to run any hazard, or expose himself to sufferings, for the public good, for his friend, or for his country. I know that he sometimes expresses himself in a different strain. But this is the natural consequence of his avowed principles. And therefore Epictetus charges him with having mutilated all the offices of a master of a family, of a citizen, and of a friend. He observes, that, from a desire of shunning all uneasiness, Epicurus dissuaded a wise man from marrying and breeding up children; because he was

have undertaken an hypothesis, they seemed resolved at any rate to defend it. See Gassend. de Vitâ et Moribus Epicuri, lib. iv. cap. 3.

(*m*) Epictet. Dissert. book ii. cap. 20. sect. 2, 3, 4.

(*n*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 77.

sensible, that if once a child is born, it is no longer in a parent's power not to be solicitous about it. For the same reason he says, that a wise man will not engage himself in public business, or meddle with the affairs of the commonwealth (*o*). His own practice was suitable to it, for he loved an easy and retired life. But, as Epictetus there observes, many of the Epicureans, though they talked at this rate, both married and engaged in public affairs.

Let us now come to that part of Epicurus's morals, which has the fairest appearance, and which has prejudiced many persons in his favour. He has given excellent lessons of moderation, temperance, patience, meekness, and forgiveness of injuries, and even continence with regard to venereal pleasures. He represents the inconveniences of indulging them in strong terms. He declares, "that when he makes pleasure the chief end, he does not mean the pleasures of the luxurious, as ignorant persons, and those that do not rightly understand his sentiments, suppose: but principally the freedom of the body from pain, and of the mind from anguish and perturbation. For, says he, it is not drinking or revelling, nor the enjoyment of boys and women, nor the feasting upon fish, and the other things that a sumptuous table furnisheth, which procure a pleasant life, but sober reason, which searcheth into the causes of things, why and how far they are to be chosen or avoided, and teacheth us to cast out those opinions which fill the soul with perturbation and tumult." He adds, that "the principle of all these things is prudence (*p*)."<sup>o</sup> What the opinions are that he thinks inconsistent with happiness or tranquil-

(*o*) Dissert. book ii. chap. 20. sect. 3. and *ibid.* book i. chap. 3. and book iii. chap. 7. See also Laert. lib. x. segm. 119.

(*p*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 132.

lity, will be seen afterwards; at present I shall only observe, that he here openly declares, that the pleasures he intends are not those of luxury and excess, as many are apt to suppose, but such as are under the conduct of reason and prudence. He frequently speaks in high terms of virtue, and the happiness which attends it. It was one of his maxims, or *νομῆαι δόξαι*, that "it is not possible for any man to live pleasantly, unless he lives prudently, and honestly, and justly: nor can he live prudently, honestly, and justly, without living pleasantly (*q*):" and that "virtue is inseparable from a happy life (*r*)."<sup>1</sup> He often recommends frugality and temperance, and the being content with a little: and says, that a simple meal is equal to a sumptuous feast: and that coarse bread and water yields the greatest pleasure to a man that takes it when he needeth it. And it is said by Cicero, Seneca, and other antient authors, that Epicurus himself lived a sober and temperate life, and took up with slender fare. So that those who allow themselves in unbounded gratifications of their appetites, and make pleasure to consist in licentiousness and excess, carry it much farther than Epicurus did, and cannot justly avail themselves of his authority.

But notwithstanding all that can be alleged in favour of Epicurus, his scheme of morality appears to be wrong at the very foundation. The virtue he prescribes is resolved ultimately into a man's own private convenience and advantage, without regard to the excellence of it in its own nature, or to its being commanded or required of us by God: for, as has been already hinted in his system of morals, there is no respect had to a divine law. The friendship of Epicurus,

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(*q*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 132. et 140.

(*r*) Ibid. segm. 131, 132.

and his followers, has been highly extolled, and proposed as a model; and yet, according to him, friendship, as well as justice and fidelity, is to be observed and exercised, only because of the profit or pleasure which it procures us. So it is that Torquatus the Epicurean argues, in Cicero's first book *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*. He says the same thing of temperance: and blames luxury and effeminacy, because they who indulge it, being allured by present pleasures, expose themselves to greater pains, diseases, &c. afterwards. It is one of Epicurus's maxims, as it was also of the Cyrenaics, that no pleasure is in itself an evil, but the things that are the causes of some pleasure, bring on many more troubles than pleasures (*s*); where he seems to blame no pleasures as evil, except on account of the greater troubles to which they expose the man that indulges them. Agreeably to this maxim, he says, "a wise man will not have carnal commerce with any woman which the law forbids him to touch (*t*)."<sup>1</sup> So that he makes the laws, i. e. the laws of the country where a man lives, and a man's own convenience, the only measure of continence: and in effect allows a man to indulge himself in any pleasures or gratifications, which are not prohibited by the laws, provided he does not run into such excesses in those pleasures as may hurt himself. Epicurus, therefore, if he had lived in Persia, would have had no objection to the incestuous mixtures there allowed by the laws. At Athens, where he dwelt, adultery was forbidden under severe penalties, he would not therefore, according to his principles, touch married women. But Leontium, a philosophical Athenian courtesan, was mistress both to him and his intimate friend and com-

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(*s*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 141.

(*t*) Ibid. lib. x. segm. 118.



panion Metrodorus (*u*). Other mistresses of his are mentioned (*x*). Some authors, indeed, contend, that these stories were forged by his enemies, and extol his continence and chastity: but I do not see that Epicurus, upon his principles, could have any scruple about those practices as vicious, though he might abstain from them on other considerations. It may not be improper here to take notice of a remarkable passage in his book *Περὶ Τέλους*, de fine, in which he says, that he “cannot understand what good there is, if we take away the pleasures which are perceived by the taste, those which arise from venereal gratifications, those that come in by the ears, and the agreeable emotions which are excited by the sight of beautiful forms.” This passage is mentioned by his great admirer Laertius, who represents it as urged against Epicurus by those that endeavoured to calumniate him (*y*). But he does not deny, that it was really to be found in that book, which was accounted one of the best of his treatises. It is also produced more fully by Athenæus (*z*), and by Cicero, who often refers to it. He gives a fine translation of it in the third book of his *Tusculan Disputations*, cap. 18. p. 224. where Dr. Davis’s note upon it may be consulted. And he elsewhere gives the sense of it thus: “Nec intelligere quidem se posse ubi sit, et quid sit ullum bonum, præter illud quod sensibus corporeis, cibus, potioneque, formarum aspectu, aurium delectatione, et obscænâ voluptate percipitur (*a*).” The same great author charges Epicurus with maintaining, that all

(*u*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 6. et 23.

(*x*) See Menagius’s Observations on Laertius, p. 448. Edit. West.

(*y*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 6.

(*z*) Deipnos. lib. vii. p. 208. et lib. xii. p. 546.

(*a*) De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 3. And see Davis’s note.

the pleasures and dolours of the mind, belong to the pleasures and pains of the body; and that there is no joy of the mind, but what originally arises from the body (b). Though at the same time he said, that the pleasures and pains of the mind are more and greater than those of the body; in which he differed from Aristippus and the Cyrenaics.

To let us farther into Epicurus's scheme of morals, it may be observed, that though he forbids injustice and other great crimes, it seems to be not upon the most noble and generous principles, but for fear of human punishments. Seneca, who, though a Stoic, often speaks favourably of Epicurus, and mentions many of his moral sentences with approbation, represents his sense thus: "Nihil justum esse naturâ, et crimina vitanda esse quia metus vitari non possit (c)." — That "nothing is just by nature, and that crimes are to be avoided, because fear cannot be avoided:" that is, if a man commits crimes, he cannot avoid the fear of detection or punishment. And that in this he justly represents Epicurus's sentiments, may be fairly concluded from the passages cited from Epicurus himself by Laertius, who had a high esteem for him. In the account he gives of his *Κυρίαι δόξαι* or principal maxims, one is, That "justice would be nothing of itself, but for the conventions or agreements men have entered into in many places, not to hurt others, or be hurt by them." And again, that "injustice is not an evil in itself, ἡ ἀδικία ἔκαστ' αὐτὴν κακόν, but because of the fear which attends it, arising from a suspicion that it cannot be hid from those who are constituted the punishers of such things." He adds, "Let not that man, who secretly does any thing contrary to the conventions men

(b) De Finib. lib. i. cap. 17.

(c) Sen. epist. 97.

have established among themselves, not to hurt others, or be hurt by them, believe that he shall be able to keep it secret, though he has escaped detection a thousand times, even to this present: for even to the end of his life, it is still uncertain whether he shall be able to conceal it (*d*).” Here it is plain, that the reason he gives why a man should abstain from doing an unjust thing, is not because it is in itself evil, but because of the punishment it may expose him to, not from God (for all fear of this kind he rejects as vain and superstitious) but from men: either from public justice, or private resentment and revenge, which no man can be sure he shall always escape. Accordingly, it was an advice of his, as Seneca informs us, “Do every thing as if some person saw thee do it;” i. e. as if some man saw thee. For he denied that the gods observe or concern themselves with men, or any of their actions: “Sic fac, inquit, tanquàm spectet aliquis (*e*).” Upon these principles there is no villany which a man may not commit, if he can but persuade himself (which bad men are often apt to do) that he shall not be detected or punished for it by men: or, as Cicero expresses it, “ut hominum conscientia remotâ, nihil tam turpe sit, quod voluptatis causa non videatur esse facturus (*f*).” Epictetus sets these principles of Epicurus, and their pernicious consequences, in a strong light (*g*).

That which Epicurus valued himself principally upon, and for which he was mightily extolled and admired by his followers, was, that he proposed to instruct men in the nature of true happiness, and to direct them to the only proper means of attaining to it. Happiness he made to con-

(*d*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 150, 151.

(*e*) Sen. epist. 25.

(*f*) De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 9. p. 108. edit. Davis.

(*g*) Dissert. book ii. cap. 20. and book iii. cap. 7. sect. 1.

sist, as hath been already hinted, not merely as Aristippus and the Cyrenaics did, in the actual motions of sensual pleasures and gratifications, though these also he admitted, but chiefly in indolence of body and tranquillity of mind; i. e. that the body be freed from pain, and the mind from trouble, both in the most perfect degree, and so as to admit of no increase. This happiness he supposed to be perfectly attainable in this life; and, indeed, this he must suppose, or that it is not attainable at all, since he allowed no other life but this. The Cyrenaics, in this matter, talked more reasonably than Epicurus; for, as they looked upon pleasure to be the chiefest good, and could not deny that men are now subject to many pains and troubles, some of them asserted that it is extremely difficult, and others that it is impossible to attain to a life of perfect happiness (*h*). Nor would they allow with Epicurus, that a freedom from pain can be accounted pleasure, and even the highest pleasure (*i*). And in this also they talked more reasonably than he.

As to the means for attaining to what Epicurus accounted perfect happiness, some of those he prescribed were certainly very proper. He advised to exercise sobriety, moderation, and temperance; to avoid all excess; not to indulge pleasure to a degree that might bring greater evils; not to do an unjust thing, or any thing that might expose a man to punishment; to avoid a restless ambition; to shun envy and revenge, and the bitter ill-natured passions; and to cultivate friendship and benevolence. On these heads Epicurus

(*h*) Laert. lib. ii. segm. 90 et 94.

(*i*) Ibid. segm. 89. See also Cicero de Finib. lib. i. cap. 11. where Torquatus the Epicurean says, "Omni dolore carere, non modo voluptatem esse. sed summam voluptatem." Cicero exposes this very well, de Finib. lib. ii. cap. 5. p. 89. et cap. 7. p. 93. edit. Davis.



said excellent things, and judged very rightly that this was the best way a man could take, even for his own sake, and to secure to himself an easy and pleasant life. But his chief recipe for happiness was the raising men above all fear of evil, and thereby placing them in a state of perfect tranquillity. And there are two things which he especially looked upon to be inconsistent with happiness, the fear of the gods, and the fear of death: and he boasted that he would deliver men from both these. His remedy against the first was to deny a Providence, or that the gods have any concern with men, or take any notice of their affairs. And it must be acknowledged, that nothing could be better contrived to free bad men from the terrors they might be under from an apprehension of divine punishments; but, at the same time, it took away the strongest restraints to vice and wickedness, and the most solid support of virtue, and that which is the principal source of a good man's satisfaction and confidence under the greatest adversities. As to death, he would have a man accustom himself to this thought, "That death is nothing to us." He says, "the knowledge of this will enable him to enjoy this mortal life; and that there is nothing evil or grievous in life to a man, who rightly apprehends that the privation of life has no evil in it." And the way he takes to prove his capital maxim, which he so frequently repeats, "That death is nothing to us," is, because "that which is dissolved is void of sense, and that which is void of sense is nothing to us." And again, that "whilst we live, death is not; and when death is, we are not (*k*)." As if such quibbles and subtilties as these furnished a sufficient remedy against the natural fear of death. But if, as he says, we are without sense at

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(*k*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 124, 125. et 139.

death, this does not prove that death is nothing to us. For is it nothing to us to be deprived of life, which he himself represents as a thing to be desired and embraced (*l*)? Since this life, according to him, is the only season in which we can enjoy happiness, how can it be said, that death is nothing to us, which puts an utter end to all happiness and enjoyment? Is it not natural for a man that is happy to desire to continue to be so, and to be averse to every thing that would deprive him of it? But Epicurus endeavours to provide against this, by observing, that “a right knowledge takes away the desire of immortality (*m*).” Accordingly, one of his *Κυρίαί δόξαι* is this, “That an infinite and finite time yield an equal pleasure, if any man will measure the boundaries of pleasure by reason.”—*Ὁ ἀπειρος χρόνος ἴσην ἔχει τὴν ἡδονὴν, καὶ πεπερασμένος, ἂν τις αὐτῆς τὰ πέρατα κατὰμειτρησῇ τῇ λογισμῷ* (*n*). Cicero expresses it thus; “Negat Epicurus diurnitatem temporis ad beatè vivendum aliquid conferre: nec minorem voluptatem percipi in brevitate temporis, quam si illa sit sempiterna (*o*).” And whether this be consistent with reason, may be left to any man of common sense to determine.

There is nothing more remarkable in Epicurus, than the glorious pretences he makes to fortitude, and a contempt of pain. He affirms, that though a wise man be tortured, he is still happy, *Ἐὰν γεῖλωθῇ ὁ σόφως εἶναι αὐτὸν ἑυδαίμονα.* (*p*). And that “if he were shut up and burned in Phalaris’s bull, he would cry out, How sweet is this! How little do I care for it!” Cicero, who mentions this, justly exposes it as

(*l*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 125.

(*m*) Ibid. segm. 124.

(*n*) Ibid. segm. 145.

(*o*) De Finib. lib. ii.

(*p*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 118.

very absurd and ridiculous, in a man that made pleasure the chiefest good, and pain the greatest or only evil. He observes, that even the Stoics themselves, who would not allow pain to be evil, yet owned it to be “*asperum et odiosum*, —an harsh and odious thing;” and did not pretend to say, that it is sweet to be tortured (*q*.) But this was Epicurus’s manner. He affected to speak gloriously rather than consistently. Cicero remarks concerning him, that “he said many excellent things, but was not solicitous whether he was consistent with himself or not.—*Multa præclarè sæpe dicit, quàm enim sibi constanter convenienterque dicat, non laborat* (*r*).” But as he there observes, “we are not to judge of a philosopher by a few detached independent sentences, but by the general tenour of his doctrine—*Non ex singulis vocibus philosophi spectandi sunt, sed ex perpetuitate atque constantiâ*.” He said among other things, that a wise man will sometimes die for his friend (*s*). A generous sentence, but not well becoming a man who resolved friendship, as well as every other virtue, merely into a selfish principle, and a regard to a man’s own happiness. There is a remarkable passage of Epicurus, produced by Marcus Antoninus, which shews his magnificent way of talking, and his high pretences to virtue, as well as the great opinion he had of his own wisdom and philosophy. “When I was sick (says he) my conversations were not about the diseases of this poor body, nor did I speak of any such thing to those that came to me; but continued to discourse of those principles of natural philosophy I had before established; and was chiefly intent on this, how the intellectual part, though it

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(*q*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. ii. cap. 7. et lib. v. cap. 10. See also Lactant. Div. Inst. lib. iii. cap. 27.

(*r*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 9. See also De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 22. et ibid. cap. 26.

(*s*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 121.

partakes of such violent commotions of the body, might remain undisturbed, and preserve its own proper good; nor did I allow the physicians to make a noise and vaunt, as if doing something of great moment; but my life continued pleasant and happy (*t*).” What could the most rigid Stoic have said more nobly? But certainly, if Epicurus himself, supported by his vanity, made such a show of fortitude, the principles of his philosophy had no tendency to inspire a contempt of pain, or a true greatness of soul. The Stoics were more consistent with themselves. They maintained, that a wise man is happy under the greatest pains and tortures; but then they supposed happiness to consist wholly in virtue, that this is the only good, and that pain is no evil at all. Epicurus also held, that a wise man may be perfectly happy under the extremity of pain; and yet he made happiness consist in pleasure, and that the being freed from pain is a necessary ingredient in true happiness. And can any thing be more absurd and inconsistent than to suppose that a man enjoys a complete felicity at that very instant when he is labouring under what, according to his scheme of principles, is the greatest evil and misery?

I do not think there ever was a greater instance of vain-glory, than appears in Epicurus’s last letter, written by him when he was dying to one of his friends and disciples, Idomeneus; in which he tells him, “that he was then passing the last and happiest day of his life: that he was under such tormenting pains of the stone or strangury (*u*), that nothing could exceed them; but that this was fully compensated by the pleasure he found in his mind, arising from the remembrance of his own philosophical reasonings and

(*t*) Anton. Medit. book 9. sect. 41. Glasgow translation.

(*u*) So some understand it: Cicero has it, pains in his bladder and bowels. “Tanti morbi aderant vesicæ et viscerum, ut nihil ad earum magnitudinem possit accedere.” De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 30.



inventions." And what were those doctrines and inventions of his, which yielded him such a wonderful joy, as rendered him completely happy under the extremest pains and dying agonies? The principal of them seem to have been such as these: That the world was made not by any wise designing cause, but by chance, and a fortuitous concourse of atoms: that there is no Providence which exercises any care about mankind: that the soul dies with the body, and that there is no life after this: that pleasure is the chief good, and pain the greatest evil. And what comfort these principles could furnish in these circumstances, is difficult to conceive.

This shows how far he carried that vanity to the last, for which he had been always so remarkable. To his vanity it was owing, that he was desirous to have it thought that he was himself his own teacher, and learned his philosophy from no man; though it is generally agreed among the antients, that he borrowed the principal things in his philosophy from others, especially from Democritus (*x*). He affected not to quote any authors in his works, and exalted himself above the greatest men of his age, as if none of them were capable of directing men in the way to true happiness but himself alone. His envy at the reputation of other philosophers, carried him to treat some of the most eminent of them in a contemptuous and abusive manner, of which Cicero mentions several instances (*y*). Plutarch observes the same thing in his treatise against Colotes, a noted disciple and follower of Epicurus. The same vanity, and desire of being remembered with admiration and applause, appears in his last testament; in which he ordered, that the anniversary of his birth-day should be kept every year; and that, besides this, on the twentieth day of every month his disci-

(*x*) Cicero de Finib. lib. iv. cap. 5.

(*y*) De nat. Deor. lib. i. cap. 33.

ples should meet and feast together, to celebrate the memory of him and his great intimate and favourite Metrodorus. Cicero justly represents the making such provisions as these, as a very extraordinary thing in a man who taught that death, and what follows after it, is nothing to us (z). But it is plain, that though he was for extinguishing in men "the desire of immortality," yet he coveted for himself an immortal fame. And those of his sect were not wanting to satisfy that desire of his as far as was in their power. They in effect were for making a god of Epicurus, for delivering them from the fear of other gods; and whilst they laughed at superstition and enthusiasm, they themselves talked of Epicurus and his philosophy in the most enthusiastic strains: "Freeing ourselves (says Metrodorus) from this low terrestrial life, let us rise to the truly divine or sacred mysteries, of Epicurus."—Τὰ Ἐπικύρεω ὡς ἀληθῶς θεόφαντα ὀργια (a). The Epicureans, as we learn from Cicero, had his image on their cups and rings (b). And Pliny tells us, that in his time, which was three hundred and fifty years after the death of Epicurus, they were wont to have his image or picture in their bed-chambers, and carry it about with them; and that they continued to celebrate his birth-day with sacrifices, and to solemnize feasts every month to his honour (c). Numenius observes, that they never departed in the least from the principles their master taught, and even thought it an impious thing to do so, or to bring in any new tenet (d).

Laertius, his admirer, tells us, that he was honoured by his country with statues of brass; that his friends were so

(z) De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 31. p. 176. et seq. edit. Davis.

(a) Plut. advers. Colot. Oper. tom. II. p. 1117. B. edit. Xyl.

(b) De Finib. lib. v. cap. 1.

(c) Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. xxxv. cap. 2.

(d) Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. lib. xiv. cap. 5.

many, that whole cities could not contain them; that none of his disciples, except one whom he mentions, ever left him to go to another sect; that the succession of his school continued when all the rest failed, and had so many masters that they could not be numbered. He commends him for many virtues, and, among others, for his piety and devotion towards the gods (*e*). And if his other virtues were no better founded than this, they had a shew and appearance only without the reality. The principles of Epicurus seem to have spread very much in Rome in the latter times of the Roman republic. Many of their great men openly avowed them. Cicero, who was no great friend to Epicurus's philosophy, frequently represents his followers as very numerous at Rome, and his philosophy as having made a great progress there, and very popular (*f*). This gives one no advantageous idea of the religion and manners of that age. His principles continued to prevail under the emperors; and his followers were very zealous to propagate their opinions, for which they are ridiculed by Epictetus; because, as he observes, if their principles were generally believed, it would endanger their own peace and safety as well as that of the public. Lucian informs us, that in his time the emperor, by whom he probably means Marcus Antoninus, allowed large salaries to the masters of the Epicurean school, as well as to those of the Stoics, Platonists, and Peripatetics (*g*).

It appears, however, that the Epicureans did not everywhere, and at all times, meet with the good reception Laertius mentions. They were expelled out of several

(*e*) Laert. lib. x. segm. 9, 10.

(*f*) De Finib. lib. i. cap. 7. lib. ii. cap. 25. De Offic. lib. iii. cap. ult.

(*g*) Lucian. in Eunuch. Oper. tom. I. p. 841. edit. Amst.

cities, because of the disorders they occasioned. Plutarch speaks of the ψηφίσματα βλάσφημα πόλεων, the reproachful decrees made by divers cities against them (*h*). We learn from Ælian, that the Romans expelled Alcæus and Philippus, who were Epicureans, out of the city, because they taught the young men to indulge strange and flagitious pleasures. And that the republic of Messenia in Arcadia passed this censure upon the Epicureans, that they were the pest of the youth, and that they stained the government by their effeminacy and atheism. They enjoined them to depart their borders by sunset; and when they were gone, ordered the priests to purify the temples, and magistrates, and the whole city (*i*). The republic of Lyctos, in the isle of Crete, drove them out of the city, and issued out a severe decree against them, in which they called them the contrivers of the feminine and ungenerous philosophy, and the declared enemies of the gods; and that if any of them should presume to return, he should be put to death in a manner which was very ignominious as well as painful. (*k*).

(*h*) In his treatise Non posse suaviter vivi, &c. Oper. tom. II. p. 1100. D. edit Xyl.

(*i*) Ælian. var. Hist. lib. ix. cap. 12.

(*k*) Suide in voce Επικυρος.



## CHAPTER VII.

The sentiments of those who are accounted the best of the Pagan moral philosophers considered. They held in general, that the law is right reason. But reason alone, without a superior authority, does not lay an obliging force upon men. The wisest Heathens taught, that the original of law was from God, and that from him it derived its authority. As to the question, how this law comes to be known to us, they sometimes represent it as naturally known to all men. But the principal way of knowing it is resolved by them into the mind and reason of wise men, or, in other words, into the doctrines and instructions of the philosophers. The uncertainty of this rule of morals shewn. They talked highly of virtue in general, but differed about matters of great importance relating to the law of nature: some instances of which are mentioned.

**LET** us now proceed to consider the sentiments of those who are generally accounted the ablest and best of the Pagan philosophers and moralists. Such were Socrates, Plato, and those of the old academy, Aristotle and the Peripatetics, and above all the Stoics, who professed to carry the doctrine of morals to the highest perfection.

It was a general maxim among the philosophers, and which frequently occurs in their writings, that the law is right reason. So Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and others. But properly speaking, right reason is not a law. Reason as such only counsels, advises, and demonstrates, but does not command: nor doth it lay persons under an obligation or restraint of law, but by the interposition of a superior authority. Mr. Selden has argued this matter very well, in his first book *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* in the seventh and eighth chapters. He shews, that antecedently to men's being formed into society, no man can be so obliged by the reason of another man, who is only supposed to be naturally his equal, nor by his own reason, as not to have it in his power to change or alter it. For whence can a disparity of obligation arise, where all men

are supposed to be equal, and *sui juris*, or their own masters? Or, if we suppose them to be united into bodies politic, or civil societies, and that in consequence of this the authority of princes and of the laws has been established, yet except there were some superior right and authority, by which they should be all bound to stand to their compacts, and yield obedience to their princes, what natural obligation could arise which should bind them so strongly, that they could not recede from those compacts or agreements when they should think it for their advantage to do so? They that were naturally equal cannot by any subsequent agreement or compact become so far unequal, as absolutely to divest themselves of a power or liberty to renounce those compacts and agreements, and to resume their natural rights, if there were no power or authority, superior both to the individuals of the society and to the whole, to bind the observation of their conventions upon them, and to oblige them to keep their faith once given, and punish their violation of it. The obligation therefore of law must properly arise from the command and authority of the Supreme Being, since none but God hath a proper authority over all mankind. Mr. Selden hath produced many testimonies to shew, that the wisest Heathens were sensible of this, and that they derived the original of law, and its obliging force, from God or the gods (1). Plato frequently intimates, that no mortal has a proper power of making laws, and that to Him alone it originally and properly belongs. Cicero, in his books of laws, expresseth himself fully and strongly on this head: he represents it not

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(1) Seld. de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. i. cap. 8. p. 94. et seq. edit. Lips. This is also largely shewn by the learned and ingenious author of "The Knowledge of Divine Things by Revelation only, not by Reason or Nature."

only as his own opinion, but that of the wisest men, that law is not originally of human institution, nor enacted by the decree and authority of the people, but is an eternal thing, and proceedeth from the Sovereign Wisdom which governeth the universe, commanding or forbidding with the highest reason (*m*). And in the famous passage quoted by Lactantius from Cicero's third book *De Republicâ*, speaking of that universal law obligatory on all mankind, which he represents as the same in all nations, and which cannot be dispensed with or abrogated in the whole or in any part of it, nor can we be absolved from it by the authority of senate or people, he adds, that "God, the common master and Lord of all, is the inventor, the propounder, and the enacter of this law (*n*)."<sup>1</sup> And before him, Socrates, speaking of certain unwritten laws, as he calls them, which are observed in every place or region after the same manner, says, that these laws were not made by men, since they could not all meet together for that purpose, nor are all of one language, but that the gods appointed those laws to men (*o*).

Other testimonies might be added to shew, that the best and greatest philosophers held God to be the only universal

(*m*) "Hanc igitur video sapientissimorum fuisse sententiam, legem neque hominum ingeniis excogitatam, nec scitum aliquod esse populorum, sed æternum quiddam, quod universum mundum regeret imperandi prohibendique sapientiâ: ita principem illam legem et ultimam mentem esse dicebant omnia ratione aut cogentis aut vetantis Dei. Quamobrem lex vera atque princeps ad jubendum, et vetandum, ratio est recta summi Jovis." *De Leg. lib. ii. cap. 4.*

(*n*) "Namque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium Deus: ille legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator."

(*o*) "Εγω μὲν θεὸς εἶμαι τῶν νόμων τῶν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις θέντων. *Xen. Memorab. lib. iv. cap. 4. sect. 19, 20.*

legislator, to whom it belongeth to give laws obligatory upon all mankind. But then the question naturally arose, how these divine laws came to be known to men.

Cicero, in the remarkable passage before referred to, quoted by Lactantius, represents the universal law he speaks of, and of which he supposes God to be the Supreme Author, as naturally known to all men: that we are not to seek any other interpreter of it but itself; and he intimates that every man carries the interpretation of it in his own breast (*p*). This scheme has been already considered, and I shall not here repeat what I have offered to shew, that the hypothesis concerning the universal clearness of the whole law of nature, as if it were so obvious to all men that they need no direction or instruction, is contrary to the most evident fact and experience. To what has been before observed, I shall now add a remarkable testimony from Cicero himself. "If (says he) we had been naturally so formed from our birth, that we could clearly behold nature herself, and under her excellent guidance accomplish the course of life, there would have been no need of learning and instruction." But he goes on to shew, that "this is not the case; that nature, indeed, hath given us some small sparks, but which, being depraved by corrupt customs and wrong opinions, we soon extinguish, so that the light of nature no where appears (*q*)."

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(*p*) "Est quidem vera lex recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocat ad officium jubendo, vetando à fraude deterreat; neque est quærendus explanator, aut interpret ejus alius." Cic. de Republ. lib. iii. Fragment. apud Lactant.

(*q*) "Quod si tales nos natura genuisset, ut eam ipsam intueri et perspicere, eâdemque optimâ duce cursum vitæ conficere possemus, haud sanè erat quòd quisquam rationem et doctrinam requireret. Nunc parvulos nobis dedit igniculos, quos celeriter



sents vice as having the consent of the multitude on its side; and that popular fame is for the most part inconsiderate and rash, and an applauder of sins and vices (*r*). And from thence he argues the great usefulness and excellency of philosophy, for instructing and directing mankind, and healing the distempers of the mind.

It is an observation of the learned and ingenious Dr. Middleton, that Cicero “took the system of the world, or the visible works of God, to be the promulgation of God’s law, or the declaration of God’s will to mankind: whence, as we might collect his being, nature, and attributes, so we could trace the reasons also and motives of his acting, till, by observing what he had done, we might learn what we ought to do, and by the operations of the Divine Reason be instructed how to perfect our own; since the perfection of man consisteth in the imitation of God (*s*).” “I believe (says Cicero, in the person of Cato) that the immortal gods have dispersed souls into human bodies, that there might be beings who should behold the earth, and contemplate the order of the heavens, and be thereby engaged to imitate that order in the regularity and constancy of their lives (*t*).” To the same purpose he elsewhere observes,

malis moribus opinionibusque depravati, sic restinguimus, ut nusquam naturæ lumen appareat.” *Tuscul. Disput. lib. iii. cap. 2.*

(*r*) “Quasi maximus quidam magister populus, atque omnis undique ad vitia consentiens multitudo; temeraria atque inconsiderata, et plerumque peccatorum vitiorumque laudatrix fama popularis.” *Ibid.*

(*s*) *Life of Cicero, Vol. II. sect. 12. p. 612. Dublin edit.*

(*t*) “Credo deos immortales sparsisse animos in corpora humana, ut essent qui terras tuerentur, quique cœlestium ordinem contemplantes imitarentur eum vitæ modo et constantiâ.” *Cato Major, sive De Senectute, cap. 21.*

that "man was originally made for contemplating the world, and imitating it (*u*).” And that “the contemplation and knowledge of the heavens, and the orderly disposition of things, teaches men modesty, greatness of mind, and justice (*x*).” But whatever influence this might have upon some philosophical and contemplative minds, how few are there that can read their duty in the heavens, or collect it from the order and harmony of the celestial bodies? To refer the bulk of mankind to this for direction in morals, would be of small advantage, and would give to them, or even to philosophers themselves, little light or instruction with respect to the particulars of their duty.

Accordingly, many of the Heathens were sensible, that they needed a more particular and explicit declaration of the Divine Will and Law. The most eminent legislators, as was before observed, pretended to have received the laws they delivered to the people by communication from the gods, in order to give them the greater weight and authority: or, which amounted to the same thing, had them approved by oracles, which were looked upon as making authentic declarations of the Divine Will. To those oracles the people had frequent recourse for direction, and in this they were encouraged by the philosophers themselves. Socrates, as Xenophon informs us, was wont to consult the oracle, to know the will of the gods, and especially the Delphian oracle (*y*). Plato ascribes “the first, the greatest, and most excellent laws and institutions,” τὰ τε μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα καὶ πρῶτα τῶν νομοθετημάτων, to Apollo at Delphi. And he has a particular reference to the establishing of temples

(*u*) “Ipse homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum.” De Nat. Deor. lib. ii. cap. 14.

(*x*) De Finib. lib. iv. cap. 5.

(*y*) See concerning this vol. I. chap. xv.

and sacrifices, and the several kinds of worship rendered to the gods, dæmons, and heroes, and whatever was necessary for rendering them propitious. "Of these things (says he) we ourselves know nothing. And in ordering the city, we shall, if we be wise, believe no other, nor use any other guide than the patron god:" by which he means Apollo, of whom he had spoken just before (z). To this it may be added, that the philosophers universally represented it as the will of the gods, and which was prescribed by the oracles, that all men should conform to the laws of their country, both in religious and civil matters; and what false guides these werè in many cases, and how unfit to furnish a proper rule of duty, has been sufficiently shewn.

Another way which the philosophers proposed for leading men into the knowledge of the Divine Law and of Moral Duty, was by the dictates and instructions of wise men, that is, of the philosophers themselves. Thus Cicero, in his treatise of laws, after having said that the supreme original law is the reason and authority of the supreme eternal mind, observes, that from thence is derived the law which the gods have given to mankind, which law he explains to be "the mind and reason of a wise man, fitly disposed for commanding that which is good, and deterring from evil.—Ex quâ [i. e. ratione Dei] illa lex quam dii humano generi dederunt, rectè est laudanda: est enim ratio mensque sapientis ad jubendum et deterrendum idonea (a)." And again, he says, That "as the divine mind is the supreme law, so when it is in man, it is perfect in the mind of a wise man.—Ut illa divina mens summa lex est, ita cum in homine est, perfecta est in mente sapientis (b)." And he there argues, that right rea-

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(z) Plato de Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 448. edit. Lugd.

(a) Cic. de Leg. lib. ii. cap. 4. p. 86. edit. Davis.

(b) Ibid. p. 88. edit. Davis.

son is the same in God and man; and that there is a community of right and law between them, as belonging to one city. "For (saith he) this whole world is to be regarded as one common city of gods and men." In this he followed the Stoics, whose scheme was this; That the original of law and right is reason: that the reason of God is the highest law: and the reason of God and of the wise man is the same. So that in the issue law is resolved, with respect to our knowledge of it, into the reason of a wise man. Hence the high ecumiums bestowed by Cicero and others upon philosophy, as the best and greatest gift of the gods, the inventress of laws, the guide of life, and the knowledge of things divine and human.

But though the philosophers said such glorious things of the universal law, the law of God and reason, and supposed it to be perfect in the mind of the wise man, yet when they came more particularly to explain what the law of right reason requires, they differed mightily about it. They talked in an excellent manner of virtue in general, but it is not true what some modern writers have affirmed, that they all agreed what is virtue, and what is vice (c). There is a remarkable passage in Plato's *Phædrus*, which it may not be amiss to mention here. Socrates asks Phædrus, "When any one names silver or iron, do not all understand the same thing by it?" Phædrus acknowledges that it was so. "But (says Socrates) when a man speaks of that which is just or good, is not one man carried one way, and another another, and we differ from one another, and even from ourselves?"—*Ἄλλος ἄλλη φέρεται, καὶ ἀμφισβητῶμεν ἀλλήλοις, καὶ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς* (d). Maximus Tyrius seems to have had this passage in view, when he saith, That "the same thing is not good or evil to all, nor is the same thing base or honourable to

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(c) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol V. p. 204, 205. edit. 4to.

(d) Plato Opera, p. 351. F. edit. Lugd.



all men." And speaking of law, and right, or justice, he declares, that, "neither nation agreeth with nation in these things, nor city with city, nor family with family, nor one man with another, nor the same man with himself (*e*).” And with regard to the philosophers themselves, some of the most celebrated of them, as will be shewn afterwards, approved things as permitted by the law of nature, which others condemned as contrary to it.

Socrates, in a passage before referred to, speaks of unwritten laws, which he supposes to be of divine original, and to be observed by all men in every region after the same manner (*f*). But this can only be understood of a few general maxims and principles: and even with respect to these, when they came to be explained, there was far from being an universal agreement.

The first article of that unwritten law mentioned by Socrates, and which he seems to make the chief and the most universally acknowledged, is, "that the gods should be worshipped." Παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις πρῶτον νομιζεται τὰς θεὰς σέβειν. He doth not represent the law thus, that we are to worship God, but that we are to worship the gods: as if polytheism, or the worship of many gods, was the first law of nature (*g*). It has been often

(*e*) Dissert. i. p. 5. Oxon.

(*f*) Xen. Memor. Socr. lib. iv. cap. 4. sect. 19.

(*g*) Lord Herbert de Relig. Gentil. makes the first articles of his catholic universal religion, acknowledged by all mankind, to be these, That there is one Supreme God, and that he is chiefly to be worshipped. Lord Bolingbroke carries it farther, and says, That "the religion and law of nature shews us the Supreme Being, manifested in all his works, to be the true and only object of adoration." And if this be the law of nature, that God only is to be worshipped, it is evident, that the greatest among the Pagan philosophers were so far from agreeing universally in this, that they universally neglected and counteracted it, by worship:

said, and many passages of the antients are produced to that purpose, that there has been a general consent or agreement among all nations, the most barbarous not excepted, in the acknowledgment of a Deity. And it is true that they have generally agreed in the notion of a superior, invisible Divine Power or Powers; but not so generally as some have represented it, in the belief of one Supreme God: though many of them had some notion of this, and there was an antient tradition concerning it, which had spread far and wide, and never was entirely extinguished. But when we proceed to examine more distinctly into the ideas they had of the Divinity, or of superior invisible powers, and the worship that was to be rendered to them, here we shall find a great difference. Plutarch observes, That "poets, philosophers, and lawgivers, were all along the first that instructed and confirmed us in our opinion of the gods. For all agree that there are gods: but concerning their number, their order, their essence, and power, they vastly differ from one another. The philosophers differ from the poets and lawgivers, and these from them." See his *Amator. Oper. tom. II. p. 763. C, D. edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620.*

Another instance produced by Socrates of an universal unwritten law observed in every region after the same manner, is that of honouring our parents. And in this mankind have generally agreed: and yet they have differed in their observation of this law. In several nations in antient times, they were wont to expose or destroy their sick and aged pa-

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ping a multiplicity of deities, and encouraging others to do so. And this, as was before observed, is a plain confutation of what his Lordship has confidently affirmed, "That there is not one moral precept in the whole Gospel, which was not taught by the philosophers." See Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 97, 98. compared p. 205.

rents, pretending that this was better for them than to wait for their natural deaths. The same custom is still observed among some nations, particularly those that inhabit the countries near the Cape of Good Hope. Socrates also supposes it to be a part of the natural universal law, that parents should not have carnal commerce with their children, nor children with their parents. And yet it is well known, that there were some nations, particularly the Persians (*h*), who in other respects had many good laws, among whom this was done without scruple. And the Persian magi, who were esteemed very wise men and great philosophers, allowed and approved these and other incestuous mixtures (*i*). So did some of the principal Stoics, as Sextus Empiricus and Plutarch inform us (*k*).

That parents should love and nourish, and take care of their children, may be also justly regarded as a law of nature; and yet the practice of exposing and destroying their children was common, as I have shewn, even among the most civilized nations, approved and even required by some of the most famous legislators, and wisest philosophers.

Other instances might be mentioned in relation to things

(*h*) St. Jerom attributes the custom of incestuous marriages to the Medes, Indians, Æthiopians, lib. ii. advers. Jovinian. Oper. tom. II. p. 75. edit. Basil. See Grot. de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 5. sect. 12. who observes, that Euripides, in his *Andromache*, speaks of it as a custom general among the barbarians. See also Selden de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. v. cap. 11. And it appears from Levit. chap. xviii. that these practices were common among the Canaanites and other neighbouring nations, which shews the great propriety of prohibiting these things by an express divine law, enforced by the authority of God himself, and by powerful sanctions.

(*i*) Laert. Proœm. segm. 7.

(*k*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24. Plutarch. Stoic. Repugn. tom. II. p. 1044, 1045.

which, one should be apt to think, are plain from the law of nature, concerning which yet some of the most eminent philosophers have passed very wrong judgments. This shews, that even men of the greatest abilities, if left merely to their own unassisted reason, are apt to mistake in matters of great consequence in morality, and that their dictates and instructions could not furnish a complete rule of duty that might be safely depended upon. This will farther appear from the instances which shall be brought in the following chapter, of great errors which they have actually fallen into with regard to morals.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Epicetetus's observation concerning the difficulty of applying general preconceptions to particular cases, verified in the antient philosophers. They were generally wrong with respect to the duty and worship proper to be rendered to God, though they themselves acknowledged it to be a point of the highest importance. As to social duties, some eminent philosophers pleaded for revenge and against forgiveness of injuries. But especially they were deficient in that part of moral duty which relates to the government of the sensual appetites and passions. Many of the philosophers countenanced by their principles and practice the most unnatural lusts and vices. Those of them that did not carry it so far, yet encouraged an impurity inconsistent with the strictness and dignity of virtue. Plato very culpable in this respect, so also were the Cynics and Stoics. Simple fornication generally allowed amongst them. Our modern deists very loose in their principles with regard to sensual impurities.

IT is an observation of that excellent philosopher Epicetetus, That "the cause of all human evils is the not being able to adapt general preconceptions to particular cases (1)." This he frequently repeats. By preconceptions, *προλήψεις*, he understands general common notions, which the Stoics supposed to be originally and naturally implanted in the human mind. He instances in these, that good is eligible, and to be pursued; that justice is fair and becoming. In these and the like principles and maxims men of all ages and nations agree. But in applying these general notions there is great difference: and the best education consists in learning to do this properly. See the 22d chapter of the first book of his Dissertations. This is also the subject of the 11th and 17th chapters of his second book, where having observed that we have natural ideas and preconceptions of good and just, he represents it as the proper business of philosophy, to in-

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(1) Epict. Dissert. book iv. chap. 1. sect. 2.

struct men how to apply such preconceptions in a right manner: and that it is not possible to do this as we ought, without having minutely distinguished them, and examined what is the proper subject to each. But it is no hard matter to shew, that the philosophers themselves frequently erred in their application of general notions and maxims (*m*), and were wrong themselves, and led others wrong in matters of great consequence, with regard to the particulars of moral duty: which shews the great need they stood in of a superior authority and direction.

Many of the philosophers were sensible in general of the great importance of the duties we owe to the Deity: that, as Hierocles speaks, piety is the mother of all virtues. Cicero in his *Offices*, in representing the order of duties, places those relating to the gods in the first place, before

(*m*) Though Lord Bolingbroke frequently asserts the universal clearness of the law of nature, and, in a passage mentioned above, intimates that all men have an intuitive knowledge of it, from the first principles to the last conclusions, yet he elsewhere makes this acknowledgment, that "when we make particular applications of the general laws of nature, we are liable to mistake." He adds, "That there are things fit and unfit, right and wrong, just and unjust, in the human system, and discernible by human reason, as far as our natural imperfections admit, I acknowledge most readily. But from the difficulty we have to judge, and from the uncertainty of our judgments in a multitude of cases which lie within our bounds, I would demonstrate the folly of those who affect to have knowledge beyond them. They are unable, on many occasions, to deduct from the constitution of their own system, and the laws of their own nature, with precision and certainty, what these require of them, and what is right or wrong, just or unjust, for them to do." Bolingbroke's *Works*, Vol. V. p. 444. edit. 4to.

those we owe to our country, and to our parents (n). Yet it is observable, that in that book, which is one of the most excellent moral treatises that was written by any of the philosophers, he very slightly passes over the duties relating to the Divinity. He sometimes; though seldom; makes mention of the gods; but takes no notice of the one Supreme God. No where does he in that treatise draw any arguments or motives to enforce the practice of duty from the authority and command of God, but merely from the beauty and excellency of the Honestum, and the evil and turpitude of vice. It is a just observation of Mr. Locke, that “the philosophers who spoke from reason, make not much mention of the Deity in their ethics (o).” The Stoics, indeed, gave precepts of piety, which would have been excellent, if they had been directed not to the gods, but to the one true God. But of these I shall treat distinctly afterwards. The philosophers generally acknowledged, that God, or the gods, as they usually expressed it, were to be worshipped. But what kind of worship this should be; they were greatly at a loss to know. Some of them, under pretence of the most exalted thoughts of the Divinity; were only for worshipping inwardly in the mind, and were not for rendering any outward worship to the Supreme Being, or Him whom they called the Highest God of all. Others, in accommodation to the imaginations of the people, were for worshipping the Divinity by images and gross corporeal representations. Many were for rendering religious worship to the things of nature and parts of the uni-

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(n) De Offic. lib. i. cap. ult. And to the same purpose, Ibid. lib. ii. cap. 3.

(o) Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, in his Works; Vol. II. p. 534. edit. 3d.

verse, under pretence of worshipping God in them, as being either parts and members of the Divinity, or animated by his powers and virtues. They all in general encouraged the worship of a multiplicity of deities; and with respect to the particular rites of worship, they referred the people to the decision of oracles, and to the laws of their respective countries; though some of those rites were no way fit to make a part of that worship, which reasonable creatures should offer to a pure and perfect mind (*p*).

(*p*) Plato, in his *Euthyphro*, says, that holiness and piety is that part of justice which is conversant about the service and worship of the gods: the other part of justice is that which relates to men\*. As to the former, he does not in that dialogue give any directions what kind of worship and service is to be rendered to the gods. But in other parts of his works, he is for the people's worshipping the gods appointed by the laws of the state, and in the manner there prescribed. It is true, that the Platonists speak in high strains of what they call their divine virtue, as distinguished from that which is ethical and political: they also talk frequently of assimilation to God. Plato in his *Theætetus*, seems to have placed this in holiness and justice, together with prudence†. But the most eminent of his followers, those especially that lived after Christianity had made some progress in the world, seem not to understand this of a piety or virtue which the people were supposed capable of attaining to: nor will they allow this to have been Plato's sense. They so explain their divine virtue, as to make it of little use to the people. It belonged properly to the philosophers, and was chiefly of a theoretical nature, consisting in abstracted contemplations of the Platonic intelligible gods, the eternal ideas and archetypal forms of things, and the τ' ἀγασθόν, which is to be discerned by a "boniform light," as Plotinus calls it, and which he represents as above intellect‡. They placed the height

\* Plato Opera, p. 52. F. edit. Lugd. 1590.

† Ibid. p. 128. G.

‡ Plotin. Enn. VI. lib. viii. cap. 15.



An oath has been always accounted a sacred thing, and regarded as a solemn appeal to the Divinity. In the law of Moses it is required as a part of the religious homage due to the Supreme Being, to swear by his name, when it is necessary to do so; and the swearing by other gods is forbidden (*q*). No precept of this kind is to be found in the writings of the Pagan philosophers and moralists; nor do they any where forbid swearing by the creatures, which is condemned by our Saviour (*r*). Dr. Potter, in his excellent Greek Antiquities, observes concerning Socrates, that he told his disciples, that Rhadamanthus, the justest man that ever lived, had disapproved men's swearing by the gods, but instead of this, allowed them to swear by a dog, a goose, a ram, or such like creatures. And accordingly that philosopher was wont to swear, either by ani-

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of their divine virtue or deiform life in a perfect apathy\* and an absolute abstractedness from all material objects, as if all body and matter were in itself a pollution, and of a contaminating nature. They contrived also methods of purging and purifying the soul, and raising it to communion with the gods, by what they called theurgy. And it is to be observed, that amidst all their sublimities, and though some of them rose to extravagant flights of mysticism and enthusiasm, they made no attempts to reclaim the people from the common idolatry, but endeavoured so to model their philosophy and theology, as to countenance and uphold the Pagan system of superstition and polytheism. But it is the great advantage of the Gospel Revelation, that the piety and conformity to God which it requires, is such as the generality of good men are capable of, whom it teaches to form the most just and worthy notions of the Deity, and to worship him in spirit and in truth.

(*q*) Deut. vi. 13. Josh. xxiii. 7.

(*r*) Matt. v. 35, 36, 37. James v. 12.

\* Enn. I. lib. iv. cap. 7. 15.

mals, as by a goose, by a goat, by a dog, or, as he sometimes expresses it, by the dog which the Egyptians worshipped: sometimes he swears by a plant, as an oak, or a plane-tree (*s*). Though, if Plato represents him right, he also swears by the gods, by Juno, and frequently by Jupiter; of which there are several instances in one of his most remarkable dialogues, which is entituled, *Euthyphron*. It was a saying of Plato, *Ὁρκος περὶ πάντος ἀπίτω*. "Juramentum præ omnibus absit," as Grotius renders it (*t*); where he seems to advise the abstaining from all oaths. And yet, certain it is, that oaths every where abound in Plato's works. Zeno, the father of the Stoics, was wont to swear *ἐν τῇ κάππαρι*, by a shrub that bears capers. It is an advice of Epictetus, "Avoid swearing as much as possible; if not, as far as you are able." This probably is to be understood of swearing before a magistrate, which some of the philosophers, and particularly the Pythagoreans, disapproved. Yet he himself swears in his discourses, particularly by heaven, and by Jupiter, and by all the gods (*u*). Marcus Antoninus also swears by Jupiter, and by the gods (*x*). The emperor Julian frequently swears by the gods. Pythagoras rarely swore by the gods, or allowed his disciples to do so. But they used to swear *ἐν τῇ τετρακτύι*, by the tetractys, or the number four. But whatever was the meaning of the tetractys, in the explication of which the Pythagoreans themselves were not agreed, the swearing by the tetractys was

(*s*) Potteri Archæolog. Græc. Vol. I. book ii. chap. 6. p. 215. first edit.

(*t*) Grotius in Matt. v. 34.

(*u*) Epict. Dissert. book ii. chap. 19. sect 3. et ibid. chap. 20. sect. 6. and in other passages.

(*x*) Antonin. book v. sect. 5. et book vii. sect. 17. and else where.

so understood by them, as to include the swearing by him that taught them the tetractys, i. e. by Pythagoras himself (*y*). Hierocles, in his commentary on the golden verses of Pythagoras, in explaining that precept, *σεβας ὀρκον*, "reverence an oath," gives good directions about oaths, that we ought not only to keep our oaths when we make them, but to abstain from swearing, and not accustom ourselves to it (*z*). Yet afterwards, commenting upon that part of those verses which relates to the swearing by the author of their institution, who taught them the tetractys, Hierocles thinks it reasonable, that so much honour should be done to the master who taught them the truth, as to swear by him, whenever it was needful, for the confirmation of his doctrine; and not only to pronounce that he taught those doctrines, but to swear they were true. For that though he was not of the number of the immortal gods or heroes, he was adorned with the similitude of the gods, and retained among his disciples the image of the Divine Authority: and that therefore they swore by him in great matters, to shew how much he was honoured by them, and what dignity he had acquired by the doctrines he had delivered (*a*).

As to the civil and social duties, which men owe to one another, the absolute necessity of this part of morals to the welfare, and in some respects to the being of society, helped, no doubt, to preserve the sense of them in some considerable degree among mankind. The philosophers said excellent things, and gave many good instructions and directions concerning them. And the measures of just and unjust, of right and wrong, were for the most part settled

(*y*) Stanley's Hist. of Philos. p. 516. edit. 2d. Lond.

(*z*) Hierocles in Aur. Carm. p. 31 et 32. edit. Needham. Cantab.

(*a*) Ibid. p. 169, 170.

by the civil laws, as far as was necessary for the preservation of public order\*.

The philosophers frequently speak of that benevolence which should unite men to one another, and represent all mankind as formed and designed by nature for mutual assistance, and an intercourse of kind offices. Yet in this, as well as other instances, they were not always consistent with themselves, and fell short of that noble universal benevolence which the Gospel requires. In Plato's fifth Republic, Socrates is introduced as saying, That the Greeks should look upon one another as brethren of the same family and kindred; but upon the barbarians, which was a name they bestowed upon all nations but themselves, as strangers and aliens: that the Greeks were *φύσει φίλοι*, by nature friends; and therefore they should not go to war with one another, or if they did, they should do it as if they were one day to be reconciled; but that the barbarians were *πολέμιοι φύσει*, enemies by nature, with whom they were to be continually at war: that therefore it would be wrong

\* The lawyers preferred their institutions, as more proper to form men to a virtuous practice, than those of the philosophers. See to this purpose what Cicero says concerning the laws of the twelve tables. *De Orat. lib. i. cap. 42, 43.* and Cotta's declaration in the 3d book *De Nat. Deor. cap. 2.* To which may be added that of Tribonian upon the Pandects. "*Justitiam colimus et boni et æqui notitiam profitemur, æquum ab iniquo separantes, licitum ab illicito discernentes, bonos non solum metu pœnarum, verùm etiam præmiorum exhortatione efficere cupientes, veram, nisi fallor, philosophiam, non simulatam affectantes.*" But though civil laws and constitutions are undoubtedly very useful, and probably had a greater effect upon the people than the moral lessons of the philosophers, yet, as I had occasion to observe before, they are not adequate measures of moral duty, nor are the sanction of civil laws fitted to inforce virtue in its just extent. See here above, chap. ii.



for the Grecians to destroy Grecians, to reduce them to slavery, or to waste their fields, or burn their houses; but that they should do all this to the barbarians (*b*).

The forgiving those that have injured us, is a noble part of that benevolence which men should exercise towards one another. Some of the most eminent philosophers were sensible of this. Plato lays it down as a maxim, in his *Crito*, that a man when provoked by an injury ought by no means to retaliate it. And Maximus Tyrius has a whole dissertation in defence of that maxim. Grotius has collected other testimonies to the same purpose (*c*). But above all, Epicetetus and Marcus Antoninus have given excellent lessons on this head. But there were other philosophers of great name, who taught a different doctrine. Among the moral maxims of Democritus, one is this, which Stobæus has preserved, that “it is the work of prudence to prevent an injury, and of indolence, when it is done, not to revenge it.” Aristotle speaks of meekness as seeming to err by defect; “because the meek man is not apt to avenge himself, but rather to forgive.”—Οὐ γὰρ τιμωρητικὸς ὁ πραῖος, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον συγγνωμονικὸς (*d*). Anger was usually described by the philosophers, ὀρεξις ἀντιλυσίσεως, a desire of revenge, or returning the evil. Cicero translates it, “ulciscendi libido (*e*).” The same great philosopher and moralist represents it as the first thing that justice requires, “that no man should hurt another, unless he be provoked by an injury.—*Justitiæ primum munus est, ut ne cui quis noceat, nisi lacessitus injuriâ* (*f*).” And

(*b*) Plato Opera, p. 464. G. 465. A. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(*c*) Grot. in Matt. v. 39.

(*d*) Ethic. ad Nicomach. lib. iv. cap. 11. Oper. tom. II. p. 53. edit. Paris.

(*e*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. iii. cap. 5. et lib. iv. cap. 19.

(*f*) De Offic. lib. i. cap. 7.

again, he gives it as the character of a good man, that “he does good to those whom it is in his power to serve, and hurts no man unless he be provoked by an injury.—Eum virum bonum esse, qui prosit quibus possit; noceat nemini nisi lacessitus injuriâ (g).” And he declares to his friend Atticus concerning himself, that “he would avenge each of the evil deeds that were done him, according to the provocations he received.—Sic ulciscar facinora singula quemadmodum à quibusque sum provocatus.” But it may be proper here to take notice of a passage in his Offices, where he declares for setting bounds to revenge. “There are certain offices (says he) to be observed towards those from whom we have received an injury; for there is a measure to be kept in avenging and punishing: and for aught I know, it may be sufficient, if he that did the injury repents of it, so that both he himself may abstain from doing the like for the future, and that others may be discouraged from attempting to injure us (h).” He seems here to intimate, that if the man that did the injury repented of it, this might perhaps be a sufficient satisfaction; but he tacks two things to it as the conditions of forgiveness; one is, that the man should never do the like again; the other is, that others might be deterred from injuring us; and this might open a large scope for retaliation of injuries. Here there seems to be no room left for forgiving or passing by repeated injuries. On this supposition, a man might forgive one that had injured him once, but not if he should injure him a second time.

(g) De Offic. lib. iii. cap. 19.

(h) “Sunt quædam officia etiam adversus eos servanda, à quibus injuriam acceperis. Est enim ulciscendi et puniendi modus. Atque haud scio an satis sit, eum qui lacessiverit injuriæ suæ pœnitere, ut et ipse ne quid tale posthac committat, et cæteri sint ad injuriam tardiores.” De Offic. lib. i. cap. 11.

And how different this is from the Gospel doctrine of forgiveness, I need not take pains to shew.

It is observable, that when Plato introduces Socrates in his *Crito*, saying excellent things concerning the forgiveness of injuries, and against the returning injury for injury, he at the same time owns, that what he taught was contrary to the sentiments of the *οἱ πολλοί*, the generality of mankind. And what authority could he pretend to, which should oblige men to regard his opinion as a law, especially when it was contradicted by other philosophers? And so it is also by several of those among the moderns, who have been admired as great masters of reason. Mr. Bayle pretends, that the precept prohibiting revenge, though delivered in the Gospel, is contrary to the law of nature. The same thing is asserted by many of our deists, who profess to be governed by the law of nature and reason. Dr. Tindal, particularly, makes the doctrine of forgiving injuries an objection against the Gospel morality. I have elsewhere examined his objections, and vindicated the doctrine of the Gospel on this head, against the censures and misrepresentations of that author (*i*). At present I shall only observe, that it hence appears how far men would be in agreeing in this point, if left merely to judge of it by their own reason. And yet it is of no small importance in morals. And to leave men to themselves, to act in this matter as they should think fit, would be to open a wide door to that malice and revenge, and reciprocation of injuries, which hath produced such infinite mischiefs in the world, and hath often disturbed, and continueth still to disturb, the peace and order of societies. It was therefore a worthy object of a Divine Revelation to restrain private revenge by a Divine Com-

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(*i*) See Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation, Vol. II. chap. 9. p. 232. et seq. 2d. edit.

mand. And so strong is the disposition towards it, that all the restraints that can be laid upon it are no more than is necessary. And the doctrine of our Lord in respect to this, when duly considered, appears to be excellent, and becoming the great Saviour and Lover of mankind.

But there was no part of morals, in which the philosophers were more generally deficient, than in that which relates to the regulating the sensual passions, and maintaining a virtuous chastity and purity of manners. Some of them, indeed, talked in very high terms of the necessity of governing the fleshly appetites, in order to the preserving the due order and dignity of the rational nature: but notwithstanding this, when they came to apply these general rules to particular cases, they were often shamefully wrong and defective, and countenanced impurities which dishonoured human nature. It is an observation of Sir John Marsham, and which may be supported by good authorities, that “all manner of incest, adultery, and even masculine mixtures, were reckoned by some of the antients, who were famous for wisdom, among indifferent things—*Incestus omnigenus, adulterium, et etiam ἀρσενευσιξία*, veterum nonnullis, sapientiæ nomine claris, inter ἀδιόφορα habebantur (*k*).”

That abominable and unnatural vice, which, I have shewn, was very common in Greece, and which, Xenophon tells us, was in some cities established by the laws, was what many of the philosophers countenanced, both by their maxims and by their practice. Plato himself is accused of it by several authors (*l*); but though his manner of expressing himself in some of his works can scarce be excused, and he might possibly have fallen into some excesses of

(*k*) Canon. Chronic. secul. ix. p. 172.

(*l*) See Dr. Davis's note on Tuscul. Disput. lib. iv. cap. 34. p. 329.



this kind in his younger years, it is certain that he has strongly declared against it, in his eighth book of laws, as being contrary to nature, and which ought by no means to be permitted. Plutarch, though he represents it as commonly practised and pleaded for, speaks of it with detestation, in the person of one of his dialogists, in his *Amatorius*. Yet there were others of the philosophers, great pretenders to reason and virtue, who judged very differently concerning it. Sextus Empiricus tells us, that the Cynics, and the chiefs of the Stoic sect, looked upon it to be an indifferent thing (*m*). How much the philosophers were suspected and blamed on this account, appears from Plutarch's treatise *De liberis educandis*, where it is intimated, that many parents, who were concerned for the reputation of their sons, would not suffer them to keep company with the philosophers, who professed love to them (*n*). He seems, indeed, to think, that

(*m*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.

(*n*) I shall here subjoin part of a marginal note of the learned Dr. Ford, in his English translation of that treatise of Plutarch. After having declared his willingness to believe that the Philosophers whom Plutarch mentions, and who were the strictest observers of morality among the Heathens, " had good intentions in the love they made to boys; yet (he thinks) Plutarch was too severe in his censure of the parents, who were in this point cautious of their sons' reputation, considering how infamous this conversation was, even among the Grecians: and how ill Alcibiades was reputed of for his love to Socrates, and even Socrates himself for his sake. And the choice of the most beautiful children by the philosophers for their courtship, and the rivalries they encountered, together with the expressions of dalliance which they used to them, nothing different from those which ordinarily are bestowed by woers on the other sex, gave too much occasion for the wits of those times to expose them, as justly suspected of the foulest vices: who, under whatever pretence of love to their souls, and design to ingratiate their philo-

those parents were too austere and scrupulous; and produces the examples of Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Æschines, Cebes, and others, who professed love to young gentlemen, with a view to train them up to virtue, and make them useful to their country: yet he declares himself to be in doubt, and at a loss what to determine in this matter, and at last concludes with saying, that it is proper for parents not to suffer those to come near their sons, who make bodily beauty the object of their desire, but to admit and approve those who are lovers of the soul (*ο*). So infamous were many of those who called themselves philosophers for this vice, that “Socratici Cinædi” became a proverb. Lucian, in his *Ἐρωτικῆς*, in the person of one of his dialogists, rallies the philosophers for pretending to be in love with the souls, when it was really the bodily beauty they were fond of. And when he himself passes a judgment upon the dispute, he says, that “marriage belongs to all, but pæderasty should be left to the philosophers.”—*Παιδεραστῆν ἀφίστασθαι μόνοις φιλοσόφοις*. Lucian. Oper. tom. I. p. 890, 891. 909. edit. Amst. Origen, after having observed that we may find purity, gravity, and simplicity of manners among illiterate Chris-

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sophical counsels the better to them thereby, thus kept them company: and that it was certainly, were they otherwise never so innocent, a great scandal on their parts given to others that made an ill use of their examples.” This is a judicious and moderate censure. Some very amorous and passionate expressions of Socrates himself are mentioned by Maximus Tyrius, in the apology he makes for him, which cannot be excused from great indecency.

(*ο*) Cicero ridicules the Stoics’ pretence of loving a beautiful boy from a principle of friendship; and asks, “What is that love of friendship? How comes it, that none them is in love, either with an ugly young man, or a handsome old one?” *Tuscul. Disput. lib. iv. cap. 33, 34.*

tians, of which those are not partakers who call themselves wise men and philosophers, represents these latter in strong terms, as indulging the most unnatural filthiness, and applies to them the words of St. Paul, Rom. i. 27 (*p*).

But not to insist longer upon vices shocking to human nature, which yet passed among many of the philosophers for matters of indifferency, there were other instances of impurity countenanced by them, which, though not so unnatural, yet are not consistent with the strictness and dignity of virtue.

None of the philosophers was more admired than the divine Plato, as he was usually called, and who, Cicero says, was a kind of god among the philosophers: and yet his doctrine in the fifth book of his Republic, where he proposes to give a perfect model of a well-ordered commonwealth, is such as can scarce be reconciled to the rules of common modesty and decency. He would have the women appear naked, as well as the men, at the public exercises, and apologizes for it, under pretence that they will be clothed with virtue instead of garments (*q*). In the same book he appoints the community of women in his commonwealth (*r*):

(*p*) Origen cont. Cels. lib. vii. p. 365.

(*q*) Plato de Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 459. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(*r*) There have been several nations, among whom a community of wives was allowed. This is said to have been the custom of the Troglodytes, Agathyrsi, the Massagetæ, and Scythians, of whom Strabo saith they had their wives in common, agreeable to the laws of Plato. Geograph. lib. vii. p. 461. A. edit. Amst.

Puffendorf has give a long list of other nations, which have the same custom among them, such as the antient inhabitants of Britain, the Sabeans, those of the kingdom of Calecut, the antient Lithuanians, &c. See Puffend. de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. vi. cap. 1. sect. 15. where he proves very well that this is contrary to the law of nature. And it is a remarkable instance to shew,

that the wives of those whom he calls *φύλακες*, the guardians of the city and commonwealth, should be common to them all, and that the children should be so too; so that the father should not know his son, nor the son his father; but all should be the children of the commonwealth. He farther proposes, that those young men who had distinguished themselves in war, or were eminent in other respects, should be rewarded, by allowing them a larger liberty of accompanying with the women; that more children might be had from them for the commonwealth than from others (*s*). And again, he would have the man that was remarkable for his bravery, to be allowed, upon a military expedition, to kiss whomsoever he pleased, and that it should not be permitted to any one to refuse him; that if he happened to be in love with any person, whether male or female, it should make him more eager by his courageous exploits, to obtain the rewards of his valour (*t*). There is another passage in the same book, which I had occasion to hint at before, and which admits of no excuse, that when men and women have passed the age which he assigns to them as fit for the begetting and conceiving strong and healthy children for the commonwealth, which, according to him, is the age of forty for the women, and fifty-five for the men, they should be at liberty both and women) to accompany with whom they pleased, only excepting their parents and children, or those in a direct line above or below either of these. And if it should happen that any child should be begotten, care should be taken, either to prevent its coming to the birth, or to expose it afterwards

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that men are apt to pass wrong judgments even in things which are really founded in nature and reason.

(*s*) Plato *Republ.* lib. v. *Oper.* p. 460. edit. Lugd.

(*t*) *Ibid.* p. 464. edit. Lugd.



without nourishment (*u*). I am sorry that I am obliged to mention these and other things of the like kind, which may shock the delicacy of the reader; but the subject I am upon makes it necessary to take notice of them, as they furnish striking instances, that men of the greatest abilities and genius, when left to themselves, may fall into the most gross mistakes in matters of great importance in morals. For who might seem more to be depended on than Plato, whose writings have been admired in all ages by the best judges, as containing some of the noblest efforts of human genius, and who is particularly celebrated for his moral sentiments, which, in many respects, were undoubtedly very just as well as sublime. This great man has observed in this fifth book of his Republic, from whence I have extracted the passages here referred to, that “except philosophers were to have the rule over cities and kingdoms, or kings and rulers were to be well instructed in philosophy, and both united in one, and not separated as now; neither cities nor human kind would have any rest from evil (*x*).” But I believe it will be allowed, that Plato has given a specimen in this book, that if philosophers were to have the making of laws and the government of cities and kingdoms committed to them, they might make very wrong regulations with regard to the morals of their subjects.

The Cynics were a sect of philosophers, who professed to make morals their entire study, and to govern themselves by the pure simple dictates of nature and right reason, without any regard to popular opinions and customs, and accordingly they are highly praised by Epictetus and others. But though they gave excellent precepts, and examples too, of equanimity, patience, contentment, and a contempt of world-

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(*u*) Plato Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 461. B, C.

(*x*) Ibid. p. 466. B. edit. Lugd.

ly riches and honours, the usual objects of ambition and avarice, they allowed themselves great liberties in the gratification of their sensual passions. Diogenes was one of the most celebrated among them; for whom Epictetus frequently professes the greatest esteem, proposing him, as well as Socrates, as a model and pattern of virtue, and especially of a great mind, superior to the honours, riches, and pleasures of the world (*y*). He employs a whole large chapter in describing the true Cynic, of whom he speaks with the highest admiration; and particularly he there celebrates Diogenes, as sent by Jupiter to men to instruct them concerning good and evil (*z*). And he elsewhere calls him the minister of Jove, and the divine Diogenes (*a*). This shews, that some of the best of the Heathens, for such undoubtedly Epictetus was, laid no great stress on chastity and purity, as a necessary ingredient in the character of a man of virtue. Diogenes never married, for which he seems to be commended by Epictetus; but he found other ways of gratifying his concupiscence, which he did without any regard to modesty or shame. Some of his base acts of filthiness, committed in public, were approved by the famous Stoic Chrysippus, as Plutarch informs us (*b*). And Laertius says, that Diogenes held, "that women ought to be common, looking upon marriage to be nothing, and that every man and woman might keep company with those they liked best, and that therefore the children ought to be in common (*c*)."

The custom of lending their wives, which was common

(*y*) Epict. Dissert. book i. chap. 24. sect. 1. and book ii. chap. 16. sect. 3.

(*z*) Ibid. book iii. chap. 22.

(*a*) Ibid. chap. 24. sect. 3, 4. and Enchirid. chap. 15.

(*b*) De Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. II. p. 1044. B.

(*c*) Laert. lib. vi. segm. 72.

at Sparta, and authorized by the laws of Lycurgus, is not condemned, but seems rather to be approved by that eminent philosopher Plutarch, in his life of Lycurgus (*d*). And he gives a remarkable instance of it among the Romans, in his life of Cato of Utica. That rigid Stoic, who was accounted a perfect model of virtue, lent his wife to the orator Hortensius. This was agreeable to the doctrine of the Stoics, who held, according to Laertius, that women ought to be common among the wise; for which he cites Zeno and Chrysippus.

As to fornication, it was generally allowed among the Heathens. And I do not find that any of the philosophers absolutely condemned it, provided it was done in a legal way. Plato, in his eighth book of laws, orders that no man should presume to touch noble or free women, except his own wife; but he does not forbid them to accompany with other women, provided they were such as they had bought, or acquired in any other lawful way (*e*). Solon made a severe law against adultery; but allowed prostitutes to go openly to those that hired them (*f*). And Demosthenes speaks of it openly, and without scruple, as what was daily

(*d*) This is not disapproved by some of our modern sceptics. Mr. Bayle, in his *Nouvelles Lettres contre Mainbourg*, lettre 17, maintains, that if we only consult reason as separated from grace, and the light of divine faith, a man would make no more difficulty of lending his wife, than of lending a book; and that were it not for the ridiculous fear of cuckoldom, reason would rather advise the community than the propriety of wives. This is well answered and exposed by Mr. Barbeyrac, in his notes on Puffendorf's *Le Droit de la Nature et des Gens*, livre vi. chap. 1. sect. 15.

(*e*) Plato Opera, p. 646, 647.

(*f*) See Plutarch, in his Life of Solon.

practised, and universally allowed among the Greeks (*g*). The philosophers took as great liberties this way as any others, without being at all ashamed of it, or thinking they had done a wrong thing. Epictetus praises Socrates and Diogenes, in opposition to those who corrupt and intice women. But if they did not corrupt other men's wives, which, it is said, Socrates never did, yet it is well known, that Diogenes did not scruple the making use of common women. The same thing is affirmed of Socrates by Porphyry, in his third book of the Lives of the Philosophers, who produces the testimony of Aristoxenus, a celebrated antient author; which testimony is also referred to by Cyril Alexandrinus (*h*) and Theodoret (*i*). Socrates the ecclesiastical historian censured Porphyry on this account; but Holstenius has vindicated Porphyry against that censure, in his book *De Vitâ et Scriptis Porphyrii*, p. 41. 43. at the end of the Cambridge edition of Porphyry. *de Abstinentiâ*, 1655.

It is true, that some of the Heathens were sensible that there was a turpitude in women's prostituting themselves; or, as Ulpian expresses it, "*Meretrices turpiter facere quòd meretrices essent.*"—That harlots acted basely in being "harlots." And that there was a *probrum* or infamy in such a conduct.—"*Probrum intelligitur etiam in his mulieribus esse, quæ turpiter viverent, vulgoque quæstum facerent, etiamsi non palam.*" And in some nations they had public notes of disgrace put upon them, and were not suffered to enter into their temples. Tacitus, speaking of Vestilia, a Roman lady of a noble family, who before the ædiles published herself a prostitute, observes, that the antient Romans thought that these women were sufficiently

(*g*) Orat. cont. Neæram, ap. Athen. Deipnos. p. 573.

(*h*) Cyril Alex. cont. Julian. lib. vi.

(*i*) Theodoret Therap. serm. 1. as also serm. 4 et 12.



punished by their very avowing their own infamy. “*Satis pœnarum adversùs impudicas in ipsa professione flagitii credebatur (k).*” One should have thought, therefore, that they must have acknowledged that the indulging meretricious loves is contrary to that purity and decency which becomes the rational nature, as distinguished from the brutal kind: and that if there is a turpitude in women’s prostituting themselves, there must be also in men’s making use of prostitutes, and thereby encouraging such prostitutions. And yet it does not appear that this was regarded among the men as a crime. It has been observed, how universal this was among the Greeks. And as to the Romans, the saying of Cato to a young gentlemen, whom he saw coming out of a brothel, is well known, in which he encouraged young men to that practice, provided they took care not to abuse other men’s wives (*l*). And the famous passage of Cicero, in his oration for M. Cælius, is still more remarkable, in which he openly declares before a public assembly of the Roman people, “That to find fault with meretricious amours was an extraordinary severity, abhorrent not only from the licentiousness of that age, but from the customs and constitutions of their ancestors.” And he asks, “When was this not done? When was it found fault with? When was it not allowed? Can the time be named when this practice, which is now lawful, was not accounted so? Quando enim hoc factum non est? Quando reprehensum? Quando non permissum? Quando denique fuit, ut quod licet, non liceret (*m*).” Indeed, after Christianity had made some progress, some of the Pagans declared positively against it. Grotius has produced some remarkable testimonies to this

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(*k*) Tacit. Annal. lib. ii. cap. 85.

(*l*) Horat. Sat. lib. i. sat. 2. ver. 31. et seq.

(*m*) Orat. pro M. Cælio, cap. 20.

purpose, particularly from Dion Chrysostomus, Musonius, and Porphyry (*n*). But the generality of the philosophers seem not to have regarded it as a sin. Origen hath the philosophers of his time particularly in view, when he speaks of those, who, like the vulgar, wallowed in the lusts of uncleanness and lasciviousness, and went promiscuously to brothels, teaching that in this there was nothing contrary to decency and good morals. Διδάσκοντες μὴ παντὶς παρὰ τὸ καὶ θεοὶ τῷτο γένεσθαι (*o*). The Stoics, who were the most famous teachers of morals in the Pagan world, yet carried it so far as to maintain, that it is not absurd or unreasonable to cohabit with a harlot, τῇ ἐταίρᾳ συνουσιῶν, or to get a livelihood by such practices, as Sextus Empiricus informs us (*p*). The Evangelical Precept, therefore, which forbids fornication as a sin, and contrary to the Divine Law, is not without reason produced by some judicious authors as an instance of a moral precept not to be found in the writings of the antient Pagan philosophers. The learned Dr. Sykes, indeed, will not allow this. But all that he offers to the contrary only shews, that it was looked upon as having a turpitude in it for women to prostitute themselves (*q*): but he has produced no testimony to prove that it was accounted a sin in the men to make use of such prostitutes; or that the philosophers, before the coming of our Saviour, prohibited or condemned it as a vicious practice, and contrary to good morals, except when it was carried to an excess. It is not, therefore, so much to be wondered at, that all man-

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(*n*) Grot. in Matt. v. 27.

(*o*) Orig. cont. Cels. lib. iv. p. 177. edit. Spenser.

(*p*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.

(*q*) Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 412.

ner of impurity abounded so much in the Pagan world, since even their wisest men were so loose in their notions as well as in their practice. To convince men of the evil of that impurity which so greatly prevailed, was one noble design of the Gospel, as St. Paul signifies to the Christian converts, in that excellent passage, 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4, 5. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God."

Several learned writers on the law of nature, and among others Puffendorf, have produced good arguments to prove, that the conjunction of men and women out of marriage, and a vague and licentious commerce between the sexes, is contrary to the law of nature and reason. There is also a remarkable passage to the same purpose, from M. de Montesquieu, which the reader may find above, p. 47 (r). To which may be added another passage from the same celebrated author, where he observes, That "there are so many evils attending the loss of virtue in a woman, the whole soul is so degraded by it, and so many other faults follow upon it, that in a popular state public incontinence may be regarded as the greatest of misfortunes, and a sure prognostic of a change in the constitution (s)." And yet if this matter had been left merely to the judgment of philosophers, there was no likelihood of their determining the point: and there was great need of an express Divine Law and Authority, to ascertain our duty in this respect, and enforce it upon us by the most powerful sanctions.

(r) See *L'Esprit des Loix*, Vol. I. livre xvi. chap. 12.

(s) *Ibid.* livre vii. chap. 8. See also Vol. II. livre xxiii. chap. 2.



From the instances which have been produced it sufficiently appears, that as to that part of moral duty which relates to the government of the sensual appetites and passions, the philosophers, even those of them that said the noblest things concerning virtue in general, and the necessity of keeping the fleshly appetite in a due subjection to reason, were greatly deficient, and not to be depended upon as proper guides to mankind. The same may be observed concerning those among the moderns, who shew the greatest zeal for the absolute clearness and sufficiency of the law of nature, independent of all Divine Revelation.

It is to be feared, that if left merely to themselves, and to what they would call the dictates of nature and reason, they would prove very loose interpreters of that law, in that part of it which relates to the restraining and governing the carnal appetites. Some of them, in the accounts they give of natural religion and law, make it to consist in worshipping God, and being just to men, and loving one's country; but scarce take any notice at all of temperance and purity (*t*): or at least they allow much greater indulgence in this respect, than is consistent with that purity of heart and life which Christianity requires. Dr. Tindal seems to lay no other restraint on the fleshly concupiscence, than that it be gratified in such a manner, that the species may be propagated, and the happiness of the per-

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(*t*) This seems to be the scheme of the famous M. De Voltaire, in his poem on Natural Religion. See Abbé Gauchet's *Lettres Critiques*, tome IV. lettre 37. And, indeed, if we may judge from many passages in the works of that very ingenious author, chastity and purity, and the exercising a due government over the sensual passions, does not seem to make a necessary part of his scheme of religion and morals.



sons promoted: and of this, according to his scheme, every man must be a judge for himself, according to the circumstances he is in (*u*). Lord Bolingbroke has no great notion of the virtue or obligation of chastity, which he resolves into a vanity inherent in our nature of appearing to be superior to other animals. He says, That "the shame of modesty is artificial, and has been inspired by human laws, by prejudice, and the like causes: and thinks the law of nature does not forbid incest, except it be perhaps, that of the highest kind." He concludes, that "Increase and multiply is the law of nature. The manner in which this practice shall be executed with the greatest advantage to society, is the law of man (*x*)." Here this matter is left wholly to political considerations and human laws, without any Divine law to restrain or regulate it. And what scandalous liberties this way have been countenanced and encouraged by the laws of many nations, I have before had occasion to shew. The author of the famous book *De l'Esprit* has given a large account of them, and seems himself to be for allowing an almost boundless indulgence to the fleshly concupiscence. And it may be observed concerning many of the foreign writers, who profess to be admirers of Natural Religion, and are thought to be no friends to Revelation, that they have written in a very loose manner: they abound in lascivious anecdotes, and stories of gallantry; and paint impure scenes and pleasures in a very alluring style, at the same time intermixing strokes against Religion. But surely authors who are so loose in their writings, are not very proper to be guides in matters of religion and morality. It

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(*u*) See Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation, Vol. I. p. 203. 2d edit.

(*x*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 172. et seq. edit. 4to.

looks a little odd, that men who set up for delivering mankind from superstition, and leading them into the paths of reason and virtue, should, instead of endeavouring to correct and restrain the prevailing licentiousness of manners, open a wide door to libertinism and impurity.

## CHAPTER IX.

The Stoics the most eminent teachers of morals in the Pagan world. Mightily admired and extolled both by the antients and moderns. Observations on the Stoical maxims and precepts with regard to piety towards God. Their scheme tended to take away, or very much weaken, the fear of God as a punisher of sin. It tended also to raise men to a state of self-sufficiency and independency, inconsistent with a due veneration for the Supreme Being. Extravagant strains of pride and arrogance in some of the principal Stoics. Confession of sin in their addresses to the Deity made no part of their religion.

IF the people had been to depend upon any one sect of philosophers, for leading them into right notions of moral duty, the Stoics seem to have bid the fairest for it, as they made the highest pretences to a pure and sublime morality. Many admirable precepts and moral instructions are to be found in their writings, and the main principle which lay at the foundation of their whole system was this, that virtue is the chief, the only good.

A celebrated author, M. de Montesquieu, expresses his admiration of the Stoics in very high terms. He says, that "of all the sects of philosophers among the antients, there was none whose principles were more worthy of man, or better fitted to make men good, than that of the Stoics: and that if he could abstract a moment from the consideration of his being a Christian, he could not help regarding the extinction of the sect of Zeno as a misfortune to the human race: that if it were chargeable with carrying things too far, it was only with respect to those things which had a certain grandeur in them, the contentment of pleasures and of pain: that whilst they regarded riches and honour, pains and pleasures, as vain things, they were wholly employed in labouring for the happiness of mankind, and in exercising the duties of society, for the good.

of which they looked upon themselves to be born and destined: and this without looking for any other rewards than what were within themselves; as if being happy in their philosophy alone, nothing but the happiness of others was capable of augmenting their own." I would observe by the way, that this ingenious writer seems here not to be quite exact. For, according to the Stoic principles, the happiness of a wise man is complete in himself, absolutely independent on that of others, and incapable of receiving any addition from it. This excellent author adds, that "it looked as if the Stoics regarded that sacred spirit, which they believed to be in them, as a kind of favourable providence, which watched over the human race." And that this sect alone "knew how to make good citizens, great men, and good emperors (*y*)."

There is also a fine encomium on the principles of the Stoic philosophy, in the learned Gataker's *Præloquium* or Preliminary Discourse prefixed to his excellent translation and commentary on Antoninus's *Meditations*. He there gives a summary of the Stoical maxims and principles, both with respect to the duties of piety towards God, and those we owe to man, or the social duties and affections (*z*). The passages he produces to this purpose are almost all taken from Epictetus and Antoninus: both of whom lived after Christianity had made some progress, and had spread among many of the people the knowledge of God, and of a pure morality. These two excellent philosophers seem to

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(*y*) *L'Esprit des Loix*, Vol. II. liv. xxiv. chap. 10. p. 157, 158. edit. Edinb.

(*z*) The reader may see this part of Gataker's Preliminary Discourse translated, with the references to the several passages, and some additional notes, at the end of the Glasgow translation of Antoninus's *Meditations*.



have carried the doctrine of morals to a greater degree of perfection than any of the more antient Stoics. And any one that would form a judgment of the Stoical system, merely from the summary which that learned man gives out of their writings, must needs have a very advantageous notion of it, as having a near affinity to the rules laid down in the Gospel. I am far from denying to the Stoics their just praises. But, in order to our forming a right and impartial judgment, it is proper to take their whole system together, and not the fair side of it only. Several instances may be mentioned, some of them of considerable importance, in which they were defective, others in which they carried things to an extreme. From whence it will appear, that the Stoical doctrines and precepts were not sufficient guides to mankind, nor exhibited a complete rule of moral duty, and consequently, furnish no just objection against the usefulness and necessity of the Christian Revelation.

I shall begin with some observations on the Stoical doctrines and precepts with regard to the duties of piety towards God. This is, by their own acknowledgment, the noblest and most important part of our duty. That great philosopher and emperor Marcus Antoninus advises, "to do every thing, even the most minute, as mindful of the connection there is between divine and human things. For (says he) you will neither rightly discharge any duty to man without a due regard to divine things, nor, on the other hand, any duty to God without a regard to human things (*a*)."

And again he declares, That, "the soul is formed for holiness and piety towards God, no less than for justice towards men." And he adds, that "these are

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(*a*) Anton. Medit. book iii. sect. 12.

rather more venerable than acts of human justice." *Μᾶλλον δὲ πρεσβύτερα τῶν δικαιοπραγμάτων* (b).

One great defect which runs through their noblest precepts of piety, is, that the duties they prescribe of devotion, submission, absolute resignation, trust and dependence, prayer, praise and thanksgiving, are promiscuously rendered to God and to the gods. There are many passages in the writings of the Stoics, which would deserve the highest praise, if understood of the duty we owe to the one true God; but there are numerous other passages in which they prescribe the same duties to a multiplicity of deities. Zeno defines piety to be "the knowledge of the worship of the gods." He taught, that "wise men are pious and religious, and understand the rites relating to the gods; that they sacrifice to the gods, and are acceptable to them, and that they alone are priests (c)." Thus their precepts of piety are so managed as to uphold the people in their polytheism. This holds true, even of Epictetus and Antoninus; for a distinct proof of which I refer the reader to the former volume of this work, in the latter part of the fourteenth chapter; and it must be observed, that those which are eminent acts of piety, when rendered to the one true God, are very culpable acts of idolatry, when directed to false and fictitious deities.

An essential part of religion, and upon which a great stress is laid in the Holy Scriptures, is the fear of God. This is a disposition becoming reasonable creatures towards the Supreme Being, and which his infinite perfections, his justice and purity, and sovereign dominion, justly demand from us. But with regard to this, the Stoics seem to have been greatly deficient. I do not deny, that they pre-

(b) Anton. Medit. book xi. sect. 20.

(c) Diog. Laert. lib. vii. segm. 119.

scribed a fear of reverence or veneration. *Ἀιδεσις*, "reverence the gods," was one of their precepts, and is urged by Antoninus. But there is a fear of God as the just punisher of vice and wickedness, which is also of great importance in religion in the present state of mankind, and this had properly no place in the Stoical system. Zeno makes it one of the requisites to happiness, not to fear the gods. And perfect liberty and tranquillity of mind, according to Seneca, consists in neither fearing the gods nor men, and in a man's having an absolute power over himself. "Quæris quæ sit ista? [tranquillitas animi et absoluta libertas.]" He answers, "Non homines timere non deos: in seipsum habere maximam potestatem: inestimabile bonum est suum fieri (*d*)."

And indeed, according to their scheme of principles, and the idea they give of a wise man, it is not in the power of God to hurt him, or to hinder his being completely happy. For as to what are accounted external evils and bodily pains, they are really no evils at all, and the wise man can enjoy himself, and be perfectly happy in the severest torments: and as to his mind, he can wrap himself up in his own virtue, which is self-sufficient and independent: so that it may be said, not only that God will not, but that he cannot do any thing to render him unhappy (*e*).

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(*d*) See at the end of his 75th epistle.

(*e*) The Stoics, through an affectation of greatness of mind, destroyed, as far as in them lay, the influence of fear in mortals, by taking away the fear of the gods, of pain, sickness, disgrace, and death, which tends to subvert one of the main principles of government, both human and divine. Any one that has made due reflections on the state of the world, and on human nature, must be sensible that the passion of fear is implanted in the heart of man for very wise ends, and, if properly made use of, may answer very important purposes. It seems evident, that this

To which it may be added, that the Stoics advanced such a notion of the Divine Goodness, as tended to free men in a great measure from the fear of God, and was scarce consistent with punitive justice. Antoninus declares, speaking of the Intelligence which governs the universe, that no man is hurt by it (*f*). I do not remember that he ever speaks of God's being angry with bad men for their wickedness; nor indeed can I well see what room there is for it upon his scheme. Some of the reasons which are urged by him and Epictetus, and which I shall particularly consider afterwards, to shew that good men should not be angry at the wickedness of others, would equally prove, if they were just and well founded, that God should not be so. And accordingly, never do Epictetus or Antoninus, as far as I remember, give any intimation of God's calling men to an account, and punishing them for their sins. Antoninus says, That "the gods in a long eternity must always bear with a numerous wicked world (*g*)."  
 The Stoics, indeed, acknowledged an imperial head of the universe, and maintained that the world was governed by laws: but they allowed no proper sanctions of rewards and punishments to enforce obedience to those laws, but such as necessarily flow from the nature of the actions themselves. They affirmed, that their own virtues were the only rewards of the good and virtuous, and their own vices the only punishments of the wicked. There are many passages of Epictetus

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is one way by which the Author of Nature designed mankind should be governed; and that it is this which gives force to the sanctions of law, and without which they would have small effect.

(*f*) Anton. Medit. book vi. sect. 1.

(*g*) Ibid. book vii. sect. 70.



to this purpose (*h*). So Seneca says, that the greatest punishment of an injury that is done, is the having done it. “*Maxima est injuriæ factæ pœna, fecisse: nec quisquam gravius afficitur, quàm qui ad supplicium pœnitentiæ traditur (i).*” This seems to be a noble way of talking, and to argue high notions of the intrinsic excellency of virtue, and the evil and deformity of vice and sin. But if this were all the punishment wicked men were to expect, to be left to their own reflections, and to the natural consequences of their own actions, without any farther punishment to be inflicted upon them by a governing authority, it would be of the most pernicious consequence to the peace and order of the moral world. No human government could subsist upon this foot: and if no other punishment were to be expected from God, it would go a great way to banish the fear of God from among men. Plutarch observes, that the famous Stoic Chrysippus, in his books against Plato, concerning justice, says, that “*Cephalus did not rightly deter men from injustice by the fear of the gods; and that many things may be probably offered to the contrary; impugning the discourse concerning divine punishments, as nothing different from the tales of Akko and Alphito, which women are wont to frighten children withal.*” Yet Plutarch adds, as an instance of the Stoical contradictions, that Chrysippus elsewhere speaks of the gods as sending punishments, that, admonished by these examples, men may not dare to attempt the doing wicked things (*k*).

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(*h*) The reader may consult his Dissertations, book i. chap. 12. sect. 2. book iii. chap. 7. at the end. And *ibid.* chap. 24. sect. 2. and book iv. chap. 9. sect. 2.

(*i*) Sen. de Irâ, lib. iii. cap. 26.

(*k*) De Stoic. Repugna. Oper. tom. II. p. 1040. edit. Xyl.

It is a noted saying of Seneca, that "no man in his sound reason fears the gods: for it is a madness to be afraid of the things which are salutary."—"Deos nemo sanus timet: furor est enim metuere salutare (*l*).” And again, he represents the gods as of a mild and gentle nature, "having it neither in their inclination, nor in their power, to hurt any one; and that they have no power but what is beneficent and salutary"—"Quædam sunt quæ nocere non possunt, nullamque vim nisi beneficam et salutarem habent: ut dii immortales, qui nec volunt obesse, nec possunt. Natura enim illis mitis et placida est, tam longè remota ab alienâ injuriâ quam à suâ (*m*).” He expresses himself to the same purpose in another place. "Errat, si quis putat illos nocere velle; non possunt: nec accipere injuriam queunt, nec facere;" i. e. "He errs, who thinks the gods are willing to hurt any man; they cannot do it: they can neither do nor suffer any hurt or injury." And yet he there talks of their sending chastisements, to correct and restrain some persons, and putting on a shew of punishing them (*n*).

I think upon the whole, it may be justly said, that the doctrine of the Stoics tended to take away, or at least very much to weaken and diminish, the fear of God as a punisher of sin. Such a fear was frequently represented by them as base and superstitious. And yet some fear of this kind seems to be a necessary and most useful part of the religion of sinful creatures, and is one of the most powerful preservatives against sin and wickedness. Accordingly, it is what our Saviour most expressly prescribes, at the same time that he directs his disciples not to be afraid of

(*l*) Sen. de Benefic. lib. iv. cap. 19.

(*m*) Sen. de Irâ, lib. ii. cap. 27.

(*n*) Sen. Epist. 95.

the power or displeasure of the greatest man upon earth, Luke xii. 4, 5.

There is another part of the Stoical system, which is not very consistent with that profound veneration for the Supreme Being, and that humble sense of our entire dependence upon him, which is a necessary branch of true piety. They proposed to raise men to a state of absolute independency, and they thereby put them upon affecting a kind of equality with God himself. The notion they had of making the souls of men effluxes and portions of the Divinity had a manifest tendency to cherish this presumption. That this was the notion even of the best of the Stoics, such as Epictetus and Antoninus, appears from express passages quoted from both these excellent philosophers in the former part of this work, chap. xii. To what was there observed, I shall here add one passage more from Epictetus. "As to the body (saith he), thou art a small part of the universe; but in respect of the mind or reason, neither worse nor less than the gods. Will you not place your good there, where you are equal to the gods (*o*)."

I cannot think it becoming the veneration we owe to the Supreme Being, to assert, as Epictetus does, that the will of man is unconquerable by God himself. In opposition to the threatening, "I will fetter thee," he answers, "What sayest thou, man? Fetter me! Thou wilt fetter my feet: but Jupiter himself cannot overcome my choice;" i. e. my deliberate election or determination. *Τὴν προαίρεσιν ἔδ' ὁ Ζεὺς νικῆσαι δύναται* (*n*). He seems elsewhere to say, that it is God that hath appointed it to be so. "God (saith he) hath given us faculties, by which we may bear every event without being depressed or broken by it; but like a good prince, and

(*o*) Epict. Dissert. book i. chap. 12. sect. 2.

(*n*) Ibid. chap. 1. sect. 6.

a true father, hath rendered them incapable of restraint, compulsion, or hindrance, and entirely dependent on our own pleasure; nor hath he reserved a power even to himself, of hindering or restraining them (*q*).” This he afterwards explains in this manner. “If God hath constituted that portion, which he hath separated from his own essence, and given to us, capable of being restrained or compelled, either by himself or by any other, he would not have been God, nor have taken care of us in a due manner (*r*).” This appears to me to be a very rash and presumptuous way of talking. I do not well understand the strain of his reasoning. But it seems to be this: that God hath made us, with respect to the freedom of our will, independent of himself, yea, and to have necessarily made us so; because we are parts of God, which he hath separated from his own essence; and therefore are no more to be constrained and compelled than he is: and that if he had made us capable of being compelled, either by himself or by any other, he would not have been God: for it would follow that he himself might be compelled, if we, who are portions of his essence, might be so: and consequently he would not be God. For it is necessarily included in the idea of God, that he is independent, and not liable to compulsion.

Seneca, Epictetus, and Antoninus, often talk of our having a God within us, by which they understand the rational human soul. And many of the Stoics carried to it such a height of arrogance, that they in effect equalled their wise man with God, in virtue, perfection, and happiness. “It is a common conception concerning the gods (saith Plutarch) that in nothing do they so much excel men as in happiness

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(*q*) Epict. Dissert. book i. chap. 6. sect. 6.

(*r*) Ibid. chap. 17. sect. 2.



and virtue: but Chrysippus does not allow them this prerogative." Accordingly, he produces a passage from that famous Stoic, in which he saith, that "Jupiter has no pre-eminence above Dion in virtue: but that Jupiter and Dion, being both wise, are in like manner helpful or profitable to one another." Ἀρετῇ τε ἔχ' ὑπερέχειν τον Δία τῷ Δίῳνος, ὠφελεῖσθαι τε ὁμοίως ὑπο ἀλλήλων τον Δία καὶ τον Δίωνα σόφους ὄντας. Plutarch adds, that the Stoics say, that "the man who does not come short of the gods in virtue, does not come short of them in happiness, but is equally happy with Jupiter the saviour, even then when being unfortunate because of diseases, and bodily torments, he puts an end to his own life, provided he be a wise man (*s*).” The same author produces another arrogant saying of Chrysippus, in his third book of Nature, that “as it is proper and becoming for Jupiter to glory in himself, and in his own life, and to think and speak magnificently of himself, as living in a manner that deserves to be highly spoken of; so these things are becoming all good men, as being in nothing exceeded by Jupiter (*t*).” To this may be added another passage of Chrysippus, quoted by Stobæus, that “the happiness of good men differeth in nothing from the divine happiness; and that the happiness of Jupiter is in nothing more eligible, more beautiful, more venerable, than that of wise men (*u*).”

Seneca has many passages in the same strain. He says, That “a wise man lives upon a parity or equality with the gods (*x*).” That “a good man differs only in time from

(*s*) Plut. de Commun. Notit. adver. Stoic. Oper. tom. II. p. 1076. A, B.

(*t*) De Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. II. p. 1038. C. edit. Xyl.

(*u*) Stob. Eclog. Ethic. lib. ii. p. 178. edit. Plantin.

(*x*) “Sapiens cum diis ex pari vivit.” Sen. epist. 59.

God (y).” And this in the Stoical scheme is no great matter, since they held that the length of duration makes no difference as to happiness. And accordingly he directly asserts, that “God does not exceed the wise man in happiness, though he does in age (z).” To the same purpose Cicero gives it as the sentiment of the Stoics, that “from virtue arises a happy life, like and equal to the gods, giving place to them in nothing but immortality, which does not in the least conduce to the living happily (a).” Seneca seems to mention it to the advantage of the wise man, that “he has the art of crowding the whole of happiness into a narrow compass.” And he carries it so far as to say, that “there is one thing in which the wise man excels God, that God is wise by the benefit of nature, and not by his own choice (b).” He mentions with approbation, some arrogant sayings of Sextius. As, that “Jupiter can do no more than a good man. Jupiter indeed has more things to bestow upon men: but of two good persons, he is not the better who is richer.—That a wise man sees and contemns all worldly goods which others are possessed of, with an equal mind, as well as Jupiter; and for this he values and admires himself the more, that Jupiter cannot make use of them, the wise man will not (c).”

(y) “*Bonus vir tempore tantum à Deo differt.*” Idem, de Providentiâ, cap. 1.

(z) “*Deus non vincit sapientem in felicitate, etiamsi vincat ætate.*” Idem, epist. 73.

(a) “*E virtutibus vita beata existit, par et similis deorum, nullâ re nisi immortalitate, quæ nihil ad beate vivendum pertinet, cedens, cœlestibus.*” Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.

(b) “*Mehercule magni artificis est clausisse totum in exiguo. —Est aliquid quo sapiens antecedit Deum. Ille naturæ beneficio, non suo sapiens est.*” Sen. epist. 53.

(c) Solebat dicere Sextius, “*Jovem plus non posse quàm*

These are extravagant strains, which cannot be excused from impiety, and yet are the genuine consequences of the Stoical principles. To which may be added, their high pretensions to self-sufficiency. "The condition and character of a philosopher (says Epictetus) is, that he expects all that might profit or hurt him only from himself (*d*)."

This naturally led to self-confidence and self-dependence. Seneca makes the confiding in a man's self the only cause and support of a happy life. "Unum bonum est, quod beatæ vitæ causa et fundamentum est, sibi fidere (*e*)."

This might be so explained as to admit of a good sense; but if we compare it with the other parts of the Stoical system, it breathes that arrogance and self-sufficiency for which they were so remarkable, and which naturally flowed from their avowed principles. And accordingly Seneca himself, in the same epistle, represents it as needless to apply to the gods by prayer, since it is in a man's own power to make himself happy. "Turpe est etiamnum deos fatigare. Quid votis opus est? Fac te ipse felicem (*f*)."

And, speaking of virtue and an uniform course of life consistent with itself, he saith, "This is the chief good, which if thou possessest, thou wilt begin to be a companion of the gods, not a supplicant to them."—"Hoc est summum bonum, quod si occupas, incipis deorum esse socius, non supplex." And again, speaking of persevering in a good mind, he says, "How

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bonum virum Plura habet Jupiter quæ præstet hominibus: sed inter duos bonos, non est melior qui locupletior.—Sapiens tam æquo animo omnia apud alios videt contemnitque, quàm Jupiter; et hoc se suspicit quod Jupiter uti illis non potest, sapiens non vult." Sen. epist. 73. at the latter end.

(*d*) Epict. Enchirid. chap. 33. Miss Carter's translation.

(*e*) Sen. epist. 31.

(*f*) Id. Ibid.

foolish is it to wish or pray for it, when thou canst give it to thyself? There is no need to lift up thy hands to heaven.”—“*Quam stultum est optare cum possis à te impetrare? Non sunt ad cælum elevandæ manus (g),*” &c. This was talking consistently with their scheme, which went upon this principle, that virtue is properly and absolutely in our own power, and that God himself cannot overcome our choice. But in this matter, as in several others, the Stoics were not always consistent with themselves. Seneca himself elsewhere gives it as his advice to his friend, in his tenth epistle, that he should pray for a good mind and a sound state, first of the soul, then of the body. “*Roga bonam mentem, bonam valetudinem animi deinde corporis.*” There are several passages both in Epictetus and Antoninus, which recommend the praying for divine assistances in the performance of our duty. The former, speaking of the combat against the passions, and appearances of things, saith, “Remember God, invoke him for your aid and protector, as sailors do Castor and Pollux in a storm (*h*).” And An-

(*g*) Sen. epist. 41. It is to be observed, that it was a general practice among the Heathens to pray to their gods; but then the things they ordinarily prayed for, were only outward advantages, or what are usually called the goods of fortune: as to wisdom and virtue, they thought every man was to depend only upon himself for obtaining it. There is a passage of Cotta in Cicero’s third book *de Nat. Deor.* which is very full to this purpose, and which I have produced and considered at large, Vol. I. chap. xvii. With this may be compared that passage of Horace:

“*Hoc satis est orare Jovem, qui donat et aufert,  
Det vitam, det opes, æquum mi animum ipse parabo.*”

Horat. Epist. lib. i. ep. 18.

(*h*) Epictetus here mentions God in the singular number, and so he does in some other passages. And when Christian writers



toninus intimates, that we ought to pray to the gods to give us their assistance, even in things which they have put in our own power: and particularly, that we ought to pray to the gods that they would enable us to govern our desires and fears with regard to external things. See his *Meditations*, book ix. sect. 40. And both the one and the other of these philosophers gives thanks to God for moral improvements. Even Seneca himself seems to suppose, that a wise man ought to do this: though he mentions the giving thanks in a way that has a great mixture of vain-glory in it. “ Ille

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meet with such passages, they immediately are for interpreting them of the one true God, the Supreme Lord of the universe, and of him only. But in this they are frequently mistaken. Plato, in a passage I have taken notice of before, Vol. I. chap. xvii. represents it as the practice of every prudent man to apply to God by prayer in every undertaking: but it is evident that this is there to be understood either of the patron god, whom he elsewhere supposes to be Apollo, or some other of the popular deities. Antoninus, in the passages I have here referred to, supposes the gods to be authors and givers of all good things, and that to them we are to offer up our prayers for divine assistances, and our thanksgivings for the blessings we enjoy. And Epictetus himself, in his *Enchiridion*, supposes the administration of things in the universe to be in the hands of the gods, and that they order all things with the most perfect understanding, justice and goodness. It was a maxim with the Stoics, that wisdom cometh from the gods to men. And if the gods, or any one of them, were applied to for assistance, it would, according to the Pagan notions, have answered the intention of Epictetus's advice. It must be considered, that in the Stoical scheme the whole animated system of the universe was God, and the several parts of the universe were so many parts, members or powers of the Divinity, to which they gave several appellations of particular gods or goddesses. But for a more distinct account of this, I must refer the reader to what is said in the former volume, chap. xiii. xiv.

verò gloriatur audacter, et diis agat gratias.”—“Let him boldly glory (says he) and give thanks to the gods.”

There is another part of religion recommended in Scripture, and which ought to accompany our prayers and acts of devotion in this present sinful state; and that is, the confessing our sins to God, the humbling ourselves deeply before him on the account of them, and imploring the pardon of them. But this seems not to be a part of religion which the Stoics prescribe. Antoninus, indeed, speaks of repentance, *ἡ μετένοια*, as a reprehension of a man’s self for having neglected something useful. See his *Meditations*, book viii. sect. 10. And he talks of a man’s condemning himself for the wrong he hath done, which he compares to the tearing his own flesh. *Ibid.* book xii. sect. 16. But this seems to have been regarded rather as a punishment inflicted, than as a duty required. According to that of Seneca; “*Nec quisquam gravius afficitur, quam qui ad supplicium pœnitentiæ traditus.*” Where he speaks of repentance as the greatest punishment a man can suffer. But I do not find that they prescribe and urge it upon men as a duty of religion to acknowledge their guilt to God, with an ingenuous godly sorrow and deep humiliation, for having sinned against him. Nor indeed, could they consistently do it, considering the apologies they frequently make for sin, to shew that men are not to be blamed or condemned on the account of it, which I shall have occasion to take notice of.

Under the greatest outward evils and calamities, they did not direct men to humble themselves under the hand of God, and to reflect upon their sins as the causes of those evils. Instead of this, they talked in a high magnificent strain, that these things were no evils at all, and that let what would befall them, they had strength sufficient to bear it. “Dare to look up to God (saith Epictetus) and say, make use of me for the future as thou wilt: I am of the same mind with thee: I am equal to any thing which thou

shalt lay upon me." This seems to me to be the meaning of the phrase here used in the original, ἵσως ἐπιμὴ. He adds, "I refuse nothing which seems good to thee: lead me where thou wilt (*i*)," &c. Here and in what follows, as well as in other parts of his writings, there are admirable strains of resignation, and compliance with the will of God: though I am sorry to observe, that there is too frequently along with it a mixture of self-sufficiency, and confidence in his own strength, without that humble sense of his own weakness and unworthiness, which becomes such creatures as we are in this present state of imperfection and sin (*k*).

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(*i*) Epictet. Dissert. book ii. chap. 16. sect. 4.

(*k*) That resignation to God which makes so great an appearance in the writings of the Stoics, and which has been often produced as an instance of their devout temper of mind, seems, if duly examined, to be in several respects different from that meek and humble submission to the will of God which Christianity requires. Stoicism prescribes an unfeeling temper under afflictions. It is a stiffness of soul that scorns to bend under adversity, and proceeds upon the supposition that no external calamities are evils, or can really hurt us in the least: that they are things of an indifferent nature, and in which we have no concern: and that abstracting from all foreign helps, or hope of future happiness, the mind has strength enough in itself, to despise and overcome the very worst events which can possibly befall us. The Stoical resignation, strictly considered, leaves no room for deprecating calamities, or for humble applications to God for removing or allaying them. This indeed, has a shew of an invincible greatness of mind, which is apt to dazzle us; but does not seem to be suitable to our condition and circumstances in this present state, or to comport with the designs of Providence. If God sendeth afflictions and adversities upon us, it must be supposed to be his will that we should have an affecting sense of them, so as not to despise or make light of his corrections and trials, as if they were things that do not concern us:

One should think, that at the time of death, in reflecting on the errors of a past life, some acknowledgments of our faults, and petitions for pardoning mercy, would be necessary: yet when Epictetus introduces a dying man making his address to God, nothing of this appears: it is all in a strain of self-confidence, asserting his own perfect conformity and obedience to the will of God, without the least acknowledgment of any failure or neglect of duty he had been ever guilty of (1). I shall here subjoin Miss Carter's

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and therefore to stand out against them with an unfeeling apathy, cannot be esteemed a proper resignation or conformity to the Divine will. How much more agreeable to reason and humanity is the resignation prescribed in the Holy Scriptures, and of which our Lord Jesus Christ hath given us the most perfect example? It is a bearing affliction with a patient, but with a tender and submissive frame of spirit. It alloweth us the emotions of sorrow under them, and that we may pray to have them removed or alleviated, but in an entire submission of our own wills to the will of God, and without murmuring or repining at any of his dispensations. It instructs us to regard them, in many cases, not only as trials to exercise our faith and patience, and other virtues, but as tokens of the Divine displeasure against us for our sins, which are designed to humble us, and to put us upon proper methods of correcting our miscarriages, and conciliating the Divine favour. The Stoical wise man could not consistently consider them in this view. His resignation is rather an assent to the will of God than a submission to it, according to that of Seneca: "*Nihil cogor, nihil patior invitus, nec servio Deo sed assentio\**." Taken in connection with the rest of their principles, the resignation prescribed by the Stoics seems to be a part of the scheme they had formed for securing that liberty and self-sufficiency, to raise men to which is the great aim of their philosophy.

(1) Epict. Dissert. book iv. chap. 10. sect. 2.

\* Sen. de Provid. cap. v.



note upon it, in her excellent translation of Epictetus. "I wish (says she) it were possible to palliate the ostentation of this passage, by applying it to the ideal perfect character." [i. e. to the character of the Stoical wise man, which some look upon to be only an ideal one.] "But it is in a general way, that Epictetus hath proposed such a dying speech, as cannot without shocking arrogance be uttered by any one born to die. Unmixed as it is with any acknowledgments of faults or imperfections at present, or with any sense of guilt on account of the past, it must give every sober reader a very disadvantageous opinion of some principles of the philosophy on which it is founded, as contradictory to the voice of conscience, and formed on an absolute ignorance or neglect of the condition and circumstances of such a creature as man."

And yet sometimes they cannot help making acknowledgments, which should have led them to an humbler way of thinking. "If we would be equal judges of all things (saith Seneca) let us in the first place persuade ourselves, that none of us is without fault."—"Hoc primum nobis suadeamus, neminem nostrum esse sine culpâ." He afterwards adds, "Who is he that professes himself with respect to all laws to be innocent?"—*Quis est iste qui se profitetur omnibus legibus innocentem?* (*m*) Epictetus seems to say, that "to be absolutely faultless is impracticable (*n*)."  
And that "the beginning of philosophy, at least to such as enter upon it in a proper manner, is a consciousness of our own weakness, and inability in necessary things (*o*)."  
M. Antoninus having mentioned gravity, sincerity, a contempt of pleasure, an heart never repining against Providence,

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(*m*) Sen. de Irâ, lib. ii. cap. 27.

(*n*) Epict. Dissert. book iv. chap. 12. sect. 4.

(*o*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 11. sect. 1.

with other virtues, charges the person he is speaking to, by which he probably there intends himself, as having voluntarily come short of them. And having mentioned the contrary faults, swears by the gods, "you might have escaped these vices long ago (*p*)." And is not here matter of ingenuous confession and humiliation before God? Though it must be owned, that he elsewhere represents all sins and faults as involuntary.

We see, by the instances I have mentioned, that the Stoics were sometimes obliged to come down from their heights, and express themselves in a lower strain. But the general tendency of their principles led them to an undue self-exaltation; and this entered into the character of their wise and virtuous man. An instance of this we have in Heraclitus, a philosopher much admired by the Stoics, who in many things adhered to the tenets of his philosophy. Nothing can be more boastful and assuming, or discover a higher degree of pride and self-sufficiency, than the manner in which he speaks of himself in his epistle to Hermodorus. "I am excellent in wisdom (saith he): I have performed many difficult labours: I have vanquished pleasures; I have vanquished riches; I have vanquished ambition: I have wrestled against and subdued cowardice and flattery. Fear and intemperance have nothing to say against me; sorrow is afraid of me; anger is afraid of me. For these things am I crowned, not by Eurystheus [as Hercules was] but by myself, as being my own master, and under my own command." ἑμαυτῷ ἐπιτάττων. See also his epistle to Amphidamas, in which, among other high things, he saith of himself, "I shall not build altars to others, but others to me (*q*)."

(*p*) Anton. Medit. book v. sect. 5.

(*q*) Stanley's Hist. of Philos. p. 739. 741. edit. 2d. Lond. 1687.

The great philosopher Plotinus, so highly extolled by Mr. Bayle, for his eminent virtues, frequently speaks in the same vain-glorious strain with the Stoics: That the wise and virtuous man is not impressed by any thing without him: that he accounteth the death of mortals, the overturning of his city, or any public calamities, no great matter: nor can the captivity of himself, or his nearest friends and relations, in the least diminish his felicity (*r*). That he is void of all fear, trusting in himself, *πιστευας εαυτου*, that no evil shall ever touch him (*s*). It may help to let us into the pride of his character, that when Amelius invited him to assist at a sacrifice, which he intended to offer to the gods at a solemn festival, he answered, "It is for them to come to me, not for me to go to them (*t*)."

Some learned persons have denied that humility, either as to name or thing, is to be found in the writings of the Pagans; and it must be owned, that humility is of a bad sound among the philosophers, and among the Stoics it is always taken for a vice: but the word "humble" sometimes occurs in the Pagan writers in a good sense, nor were they altogether strangers to the virtue intended by it. But if we take humility as it implies, a deep sense of our own unworthiness and insufficiency in ourselves, and of the manifold defects of our obedience and righteousness, accompanied with a true contrition of heart for our sins, and which carrieth us to acknowledge, that if God should enter into strict judgment with us we could not be justified in

(*r*) Plotin. Ennead. I. lib. iv. cap. 7.

(*s*) Ibid. cap. 14, 15.

(*t*) Porphyry's Life of Plotinus, prefixed to his works, p. 8.

B. The same vain-glorious spirit animated the Indian brachmans. When Apollonius asked them what they were? Iarchas, the chief of them, answered, that they thought themselves gods.

his sight; this humility, which is opposed to self-confidence and self-dependence, and which causeth us to place our whole trust in the infinite grace and mercy of God for salvation, seems not to enter into the Pagan systems of piety and morality, especially that of the Stoics (*u*). There is a spiritual pride and self-sufficiency running through their whole scheme, scarce reconcilable to that humble frame of spirit which our Lord insists upon as a necessary ingredient in the piety and virtue of such imperfect creatures as we are in the present state. Here then is a remarkable instance of an evangelical precept relating to a temper of mind, which is represented as of great importance to our acceptance with God, and which yet is not to be found in the Pagan moralists.

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(*u*) It is true, that the Stoics seemed to require, that a man, as a preparative for philosophy, should have a consciousness of his own weakness and inability: See a passage to this purpose in Epictetus, cited above, p. 163. But the design of their philosophy, when once a man was engaged in it, was to inspire him with a confidence in his own strength, and the absolute sufficiency of his own virtue.



## CHAPTER X.

The Stoics gave excellent precepts with regard to the duties men owe to one another. Yet they carried their doctrine of apathy so far, as to be in some instances not properly consistent with a humane disposition and a charitable sympathy. They said fine things concerning forgiving injuries and bearing with other men's faults. But in several respects they carried this to an extreme, and placed it on wrong foundations, or enforced it by improper motives. This is particularly shewn with regard to those two eminent philosophers Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus. The most ancient Stoics did not allow pardoning mercy to be an ingredient in a perfect character.

THE stoics were particularly remarkable for the precepts and directions they gave with regard to the duties men owe to one another. They taught that men were born to be helpful to each other in all the offices of mutual assistance and benevolence, and that they are united by the strongest ties, as all belonging to one common city of gods and men (*x*). Many of their precepts tended to set the obligations we are under to love and do good to one another, and to all mankind, in a strong and affecting light. Yet it must be acknowledged, that some parts of their scheme were little consistent with that humanity and mutual benevolence, which it was the design of many of their precepts to recommend.

To support their vain-glorious scheme of self-sufficiency and independency, they prescribed an unnatural apathy. Their wise man was to be devoid of passions, of fear and grief, of sorrow and joy. He must not be grieved for the loss of wife, children, or friends, or for any calamity which can befall himself or them, or even for the public distresses

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(*x*) Cicero de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 19. p. 258.

and calamities of his country. There is a fragment of a treatise in Plutarch to shew, that the Stoics speak greater improbabilities than the poets: and he produces as an instance of it, their asserting, that their wise man continues fearless and invincible in the subversion of the walls of his city, and in other great calamities of a public nature (*y*). Seneca says, in his 74th epistle, that “a wise man is not afflicted at the loss of his friends or children.”—“Non affligitur sapiens liberorum amissione aut amicorum.” And in the same epistle, among the things which should not grieve nor disturb him, he reckons “the besieging of his country, the death of his children, and the slavery of his parents.”—“Obsidio patriæ, liberorum mors, parentum servitus (*z*).” Nor is this merely an extravagant rant of Seneca, who often gave into an hyperbolical way of expression. Epictetus, one of the gravest and most judicious authors among the Stoics, and who adhered very closely to the principles of their philosophy, expresseth himself to the same purpose. It is true that he says, “I am not to be undisturbed by passion in the same sense that a statue is, but as one who preserves the natural and acquired relations, as a private person, as a son, as a brother, as a father, as a citizen (*a*).” And he allows a man “to preserve an affectionate temper, as becomes a noble-spirited and happy person (*b*).” It is usual with the Stoics to throw in every now and then some hints, which seem to correct and soften their extravagant maxims, and reduce them within the bounds of nature and humanity. But that great phi-

(*y*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. ii. p. 1057, 1058. edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620.

(*z*) Sen. epist. 74. Plotinus expresses himself to the same purpose. See above, p. 165.

(*a*) Epict. Dissert. book iii. chap. 2. sect. 3.

(*b*) Ibid. chap. 24. sect. 4.

losopher himself has several passages which it is very difficult for the most candid censurer to interpret in a favourable sense. Having mentioned those which he says are called "great events," viz. wars and seditions, the destruction of numbers of men, and the overthrow of cities, he asks, "What great matter is there in all this? Nothing. What great matter is there in the death of numerous oxen, numbers of sheep, or in the burning or pulling down numbers of nests of storks or swallows?" He affirms, that "these cases are perfectly alike: the bodies of men are destroyed, and the bodies of sheep and oxen: the houses of men are burnt, and the houses or nests of storks. What is there great and dreadful in all this?" He owns afterwards, that there is a difference between a man and a stork; but not in body (*c*). To talk with such indifference of great public calamities, is more a proof of the want of humanity than of a real greatness of mind, and is not well consistent with a true benevolence towards mankind, or with a generous patriotism or love to our country, which yet the Stoics made great profession of. To the same purpose he expresses himself in another remarkable passage, the design of which is to signify, that the slaughter of armies is an indifferent matter; and that it ought not to have given Agamemnon concern if the Greeks were routed and slain by the Trojans (*d*). The note of the ingenious translator before-mentioned upon this passage appears to me to be a just one. "As the Stoical doctrine all along forbids pity and compassion, it will have even a king look upon the welfare of his people, and a general upon the preservation of his soldiers, as a matter quite foreign and indifferent to him (*e*)."

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(*c*) Epict. Dissert. book i. chap. 28. sect. 3.

(*d*) Ibid. book iii. chap. 22. sect. 4.

(*e*) Ibid. marg. note.

With respect to crosses and adverse events of a private nature, Epictetus every where treats them as if they were nothing to us all. I shall mention one passage of this kind among many others that might be produced. "A son is dead (saith he). What hath happened? A son is dead. Nothing more? Nothing.—A ship is lost. What hath happened?—A ship is lost.—He is carried to prison. What hath happened? He is carried to prison.—That he is unhappy, is an addition that every one makes of his own." Epictetus adds, that "Jupiter hath made these things to be no evils: and that he has opened you the door whenever they do not suit you: Go out, man, and do not complain (*f*)."<sup>1</sup> The reader cannot but observe, that though he speaks with such indifference of these things, as if they were nothing at all, and should not give us the least disturbance, yet he most inconsistently supposes, that they may be so grievous as to render life insupportable; and in that case advises a man to put an end to his life, that he may get rid of them.

There is little room in the Stoical scheme for that affectionate sympathy with others in distress, which Christianity requires, and which is so amiable a part of an humane disposition. And they seem not willing to allow the workings of the natural tender affections. Epictetus blames Homer for representing Ulysses as sitting and crying upon a rock, when he longed to see his wife. "If Ulysses (says he) did indeed cry and bewail himself, he was not a good man (*g*)."<sup>2</sup> And he elsewhere declares, that "no good man laments, nor sighs, nor groans, (*h*)."<sup>3</sup> Yet in his *Enchiridion* he says, "If you see any one weeping for grief, either that his son is

(*f*) Epict. Dissert. book iii. chap. 8. sect. 2.

(*g*) Ibid. book iii. chap. 24. sect. 1.

(*h*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 13. sect. 2.



gone abroad or dead, or that he hath suffered in his affairs, take heed that the appearance may not hurry you away with it. As far as words go, however, do not disdain to condescend to him, and even, if it should so happen, to groan with him. Take heed, however, not to groan inwardly too (*i*).” What strange philosophy was this! They might put on an outward appearance of sympathizing with their friends, but they were to take great care that there should be nothing in the temper of their minds answering to that appearance.

Thus the Stoics, whilst they aimed at greatness of mind, in effect strove to stifle the kind and humane affections. Epictetus compares the death of a friend to the breaking of an old pipkin, in which one uses to cook his meat: and asks, “Must you die with hunger, because you do not use your old pipkin? Do you not send and buy a new one (*k*)?” Who can without some indignation read this mean representation of the death of a beloved and esteemed friend? But Marcus Antoninus’s good-nature got the better of his Stoical principles. He shed tears at the death of his old tutor: and when some about the court put him in mind of his usual firmness and steadiness, Antoninus Pius replied in his defence: “You must give him leave to be a man: neither philosophy nor imperial dignity can extinguish our natural affections (*l*).” Cato of Utica, rigid Stoic as he was, carried his sorrow for the death of his brother Cæpio to an extraordinary degree. Plutarch, in his account of Cato’s life, observes, that upon this occasion he showed himself more a fond brother than a philosopher, not only in the excess of

(*i*) Epict. Enchirid. chap. 16. Miss Carter’s translation.

(*k*) Epict. Dissert. book iv. chap. 10. sect 5.

(*l*) See the Life of Marcus Antoninus, prefixed to the Glasgow translation of his Meditations, p. 13.

grief bewailing and embracing the dead body, but also in the extravagant expences of the funeral: and that this was blamed by some, as not suiting with Cato's usual moderation in other things. But how justly blameable was that philosophy which was of such a kind, that a man could not act up to it, without endeavouring to extinguish the tenderest sentiments of the human nature! Our Saviour's weeping over his beloved friend Lazarus, and the sorrow he expressed upon a foresight of the approaching miseries of the Jews, and destruction of Jerusalem, are striking instances of the most humane tenderness and friendly affections, mixed with the truest greatness of soul. And how much more just as well as amiable is the model of a perfect character, as actually exemplified in the life of our blessed Lord, than the Stoics, the most eminent of the Pagan moralists, were able to form, even in idea, in the feigned description they give us of their perfect wise man (*m*)?

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(*m*) The Gospel, in this as well as other instances, guards against extremes. It allows the tender movements of humanity and compassion on proper occasions, but prescribes a due moderation to be observed: that we be not swallowed up of overmuch sorrow, nor mourn as those that have no hope. The Stoics thought it unbecoming their wise man to give way to the movements of sorrow in any case, and particularly on funeral occasions. On the other hand, the Chinese laws and customs, and Confucius himself, their great moralist, seem to have encouraged a sorrow beyond all reasonable bounds. We are told concerning that philosopher, that he constantly shewed great grief on the death of his friends and relatives, and on occasion of the death of many others, and even carried it to an excess. It was an old custom in China, that the time of mourning for a parent should be three years; this he would have observed with the utmost strictness, and reproved one of his disciples, who thought some abatement might be allowed. He approved the conduct of an emperor, who hid himself three years in the royal garden or grove

With regard to the forgiving injuries, the bearing with the weaknesses and faults of others, and shewing a goodwill even to those that offend us, which is a noble part of our duty, there are many admirable passages, both in Epictetus and Antoninus, in which this excellent temper and conduct is urged and enforced by a variety of considerations. Many of the motives to engage us to it are the same which are proposed in the Holy Scriptures (*n*). But they sometimes carry it too far, and place this noble duty on a wrong foundation, or push it to an extreme which may prove prejudicial. The design of the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Epictetus's Dissertations, as given by Arrian, is to shew that we are not to be angry with the errors of others. A good precept, but which he there builds on a foundation that will not bear it, viz. "That all men act according to their persuasion: that even thieves and adulterers act from a wrong persuasion or error in their judgment, that it is for

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where his father was buried, and abandoned himself to his grief, so as not to take any care of the affairs of government, or converse with any body. He says, that the antient kings whom he highly esteemed, acted after this manner; and that in the book of offices it is taught, that when a king was dead, his son and successor gave himself up to grief for three years, and committed affairs during that time wholly to an administrator, who governed in his stead. *Scient. Sin. lib. iii. P. vii. p. 109 et 130.* I think the most partial admirer of Confucius and the Chinese constitutions must acknowledge, that this is carrying things to an extreme which is both unreasonable in itself, and prejudicial to society.

(*n*) Among the many motives to forgiveness urged by Epictetus and Antoninus, I do not remember that they ever take notice of that which is particularly insisted on by our Saviour, and is of the highest consequence: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." *Matt. vi. 14, 15.*

their advantage to steal, or debauch their neighbour's wife. And while they have this persuasion, they cannot act otherwise. That therefore we ought not to be angry at them, nor endeavour to destroy them, but to pity them for their mistakes, and shew them their errors, and they will amend their faults." This is the substance of what Epictetus says in the first section of that chapter. The Gospel prescribes all that reason and humanity requires in such a case, but upon far juster principles. Miss Carter's note upon it, in her excellent translation of Epictetus, deserves notice. "The most ignorant persons often practise what they know to be evil: and they who voluntarily suffer, as many do, their inclination to blind their judgments, are not justified by following it. The doctrine therefore of Epictetus here and elsewhere on this head, contradicts the voice of reason and conscience: it destroys all guilt and merit, all punishment and reward, all blame of ourselves or others, all sense of misbehaviour towards our fellow-creatures or our Creator. No wonder that such philosophers did not teach repentance towards God." Epictetus frequently represents ignorance as the cause of all our faults (*o*). And Antoninus often talks after the same manner. "It is cruel (says he) to hinder men from desiring or pursuing what appears to them as their proper good: and yet you seem in a certain manner to be chargeable with this conduct, when you are angry at the mistakes and wrong actions of men; for all are carried to what appears to them to be their proper good. But, say you, it is not their proper good. Well: instruct them then, and teach them better: and do not be angry at them (*p*)."  
But it frequently happens, that it would be a vain attempt

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(*o*) See his Dissertations, book i. chap. 26. sect. 1. And *ibid.* chap. 28. sect. 2.

(*p*) Anton. Medit. book vi. sect. 27.



to instruct them; though undoubtedly it would be well done to endeavour, as far as we can, to make them sensible of their guilt, and reclaim them from their evil courses. But in many instances it is not for want of knowing what is right that men do wrong, but because they are carried away by inordinate appetite; and there is often no other way of dealing with them, but punishing and restraining them by terror. And so no doubt Antoninus himself was obliged to act, or he could not well have fulfilled his duty as an emperor in the administration of the government. Epictetus has another passage of the same kind, proper to be here taken notice of, in which he evidently carries a noble precept too far: "When any person doth ill by you, or speaks ill of you, remember that he acts or speaks from a supposition of its being his duty. Now, it is not possible that he should follow what appears right to you, but what appears so to himself. Therefore, if he judges from a wrong appearance, he is the person hurt, since he is the person deceived (*q*)."

To deliver this, as Epictetus seems here to do, as a general rule with respect to all persons that do ill to others, or speak ill of them, is setting an excellent duty concerning bearing injuries and calumnies on a wrong foundation. For many cases may happen, in which the most extensive charity will not be able to suppose, that the injurious person or calumniator thinks he does right, and is honestly deceived in what he looks upon to be his duty. It frequently happens, that persons spread calumnies against others, knowing them to be false and injurious, from an envious and malicious principle.

It was a maxim of Socrates and Plato, that "as all error is involuntary, so no man is willingly wicked or unjust in

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(*q*) See his *Enchirid.* chap. 42. Miss Carter's translation.

his actions, since all desire truth and goodness." To this Marcus Antoninus refers book vii. sect. 63, and he himself talks to the same purpose: "Men are not to be blamed (says he) for they never do wrong willingly." And again: "If any do wrong, surely it is unwillingly and ignorantly. It is unwillingly that any soul is deprived of truth by erring, or of justice by a conduct unsuitable to the object (*r*)."

But this way of talking is more good-natured than just. For certain it is that there are many persons, who knowingly and wilfully commit actions, which they are sensible are unjust, impelled by pride, envy, avarice, ambition, and sensual appetite. All errors are not involuntary: they may often be said to be voluntary, since they are owing to a wilful neglect of examining and using proper means for information. And to exclude the will from any part of wicked actions, and to represent them all as owing to involuntary errors of judgment, is to excuse the worst of crimes, and take away the evil of them. Antoninus sometimes plainly supposes the contrary. In a passage quoted before, having mentioned several virtues, he charges himself, or the person he is there speaking to, as having voluntarily, *ἐκῶν*, come short of them (*s*). And elsewhere he saith, that "he that willingly lies, *ἐκῶν ψευδομενος*, is guilty of impiety; for the nature of the whole is truth, and the cause of all truth (*t*)."

Where he supposes, contrary to what he himself and Plato had said, that a man may willingly depart from truth.

Another reason which Antoninus frequently gives for not being angry at the faults of others, is drawn from their being necessary and unavoidable. Thus, to induce us not

(*r*) Anton. book xii. sect. 12. and book xi. sect. 18.

(*s*) Ibid. book v. sect. 5.

(*t*) Ibid. book ix. sect. 1.

to be angry at any man's faults, he would have us consider that he is forced to it: and asks, "What else could he do (*u*)?" This is a thought which he frequently repeats in various forms. Speaking of those that have wrong maxims of good and evil, pleasure and pain, glory and ignominy, he says, "If they act wrong, we ought to recollect that they are under a necessity of acting thus (*x*)."<sup>1</sup> He compares one that does wrong to a man whose armpits or breath are disagreeable: "How can the man help it (says he) that has such a mouth, and such armpits (*y*)?"<sup>2</sup> And again, "One who expects a vicious man should not do wrong, is as absurd as one expecting a fig-tree should not produce the natural juice of the figs, or that an infant should not cry, or a horse should not neigh, or such other necessary things. What can the man do, that has such dispositions?" I do not deny, but that to express the power of evil habits, which induce a moral impotency, comparisons may be sometimes aptly drawn from the things that are physically necessary; but great care should be taken not to carry it too far, as if bad men were not to be blamed for the evil actions they commit, and as if those actions were what they could not possibly avoid doing. And I think it must be acknowledged that Antoninus has pushed it to an extreme. I shall only mention one passage more to the same purpose. "It is the part of a madman (says he) to expect impossibilities: now it is impossible that vicious men should act another part than we see they act (*z*)."<sup>3</sup> This is not true, if applied to

(*u*) Anton. book x. sect. 30.

(*x*) Ibid. book viii. sect. 14.

(*y*) Ibid. book v. sect. 28.

(*z*) Anton. Medit. book v. sect. 17. The author of the book *De l'Esprit* observes, that the famous Mr. Fontenelle contemplated the wickedness of men without sharpness or bitterness,

particular actions. There is not one bad action which a wicked man commits, but it was possible for him in that very instance to have acted otherwise.

Another consideration which is insisted upon both by Epictetus and Antoninus, to engage us to bear with those that offend us and not be angry at them for any thing they do to us, is, that in reality they do us no injury. Epictetus lays it down as a maxim, that "one cannot be in fault, and another the sufferer (*a*).” Upon which the ingenious translator very properly remarks; "This is a Stoic extravagance; the very thing which constitutes the fault of the one in this case, is that he makes the other suffer." Epictetus has many good things about patience under injuries. But the truth is, that, according to him, no injury can be done to a good man. "No one, (says he) either hurts or benefits ano-

considering it as the necessary effect "de l'enchainement universel,"—"of the universal concatenation of things." See *De l'Esprit*, disc. 4. chap. 14. But if this was a just reason for not censuring or being angry at any man for his wicked deeds, he ought, upon the same principle, not to have acknowledged a good man's merit, or to have allowed him any praise or reward for his virtuous actions. Another French author, who maintains the same principle of universal necessity, does not draw so goodnatured a conclusion from it as Mr. Fontenelle: for though, he thinks, the criminal person should not feel any remorse for the evil he has done, because he could not help it, yet he supposes it may be necessary for the public good to destroy him, as we do mad dogs or serpents. See *Le Discours sur la Vie Heureuse*, at the end of *Les Pensees Philosophiques*. And, indeed, if one man is necessitated by the fatal chain to commit bad actions, why may not another man be equally supposed to be necessitated to hate, to censure, and punish him? So that at the bottom this doctrine will bring no great comfort even to evil-doers, nor be a good reason for exercising forbearance towards them, or forgiving them.

(*a*) Epict. Dissert. book ii. chap. 13. sect. 2.



ther: but the principles which we hold concerning every thing, it is this that hurts us, this that overturns us (*b*).” He gives it as a maxim, that “one man doth not hurt another, but that every man is hurt and profited by his own actions (*c*).” In like manner Maximus Tyrius has an express dissertation to prove, that an injury is not to be retaliated. And he goes upon this principle, that a good man cannot be injured by a wicked man; because he has no good thing which it is in the power of a bad man to spoil or deprive him of, and that a good man can neither do nor suffer an injury. Seneca often talks in the same strain, especially in his tract, *Quod in sapientem non cadit injuria* (*d*). So also Antoninus says, “I cannot be hurt by any of them, since none of them can involve me in any thing dishonourable or deformed (*e*).” And he often argues, that we ought not to be angry at any injustice men do to us, because they cannot hurt us. But though this consideration may be so managed, as greatly to moderate our resentments, yet if it be understood in its rigour, according to the Stoical principles, it leaves nothing properly praise-worthy in forgiveness, or rather leaves no room for forgiveness at all. For if no injury be done me, where is the exercise of a forgiving disposition? How much juster and nobler is it to be able to say, he hath hurt and injured me, yet I forgive him: I bear him no malice or ill-will, but am ready, if a proper opportunity offers, to render him good for his evil? which is the temper Christianity requires.

There is another consideration urged by that worthy emperor and philosopher Marcus Antoninus, which deserves

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(*b*) Epict. Dissert. book iv. chap. 5. sect 4.

(*c*) Ibid. chap. 13. sect. 2.

(*d*) See particularly cap. 15. et 16.

(*e*) Anton. Medit. book ii. sect. 1.

to be examined. It is to this purpose: that the injury done us is not hurtful to the whole, and what is not hurtful to the whole, cannot be really hurtful to any particular part. "What is not hurtful to the city (says he) cannot hurt the citizen. Make use of this rule upon every conception of any thing as hurting you. If the city (by which he there means the universe) be not hurt by it, I cannot be hurt (*f*).” And again: "If this event be not hurtful to the whole, why am I disturbed by it? Nay, who can hurt the whole (*g*).” To this may be added what he elsewhere observes, "there is no universal wickedness to hurt the universe. Particular wickedness of any individual hurts not another, it hurts himself only; who yet has this gracious privilege, that as soon as he heartily desires it, he may be free from it altogether (*h*).” I do not well see how it can be said upon these principles, that there is any hurt in sin at all. It cannot hurt the universe, it cannot hurt any other man but him that commits it, nor, according to this way of reasoning, can it hurt the man himself. For nothing can hurt any part that does not hurt the whole: and sin is so far from hurting the whole, that according to the Stoic principles it contributes to the harmony of the universe, and as such may be said to be agreeable to the nature of the whole (*i*). And he expressly asserts, that "nothing advantageous to the whole is hurtful to the part (*k*).”

(*f*) Anton. Medit. book v. sect. 22.

(*g*) Ibid. book v. sect. 35.

(*h*) Ibid. book viii. sect. 55.

(*i*) According to the account Plutarch gives from Chrysippus, sin tends to the good of the whole. He says, that virtue and vice, like the difference and variety of the seasons, tend to the harmony of the universe. *De Stoic. Repug. Opera*, p. 1050, 1051. tom. 2 edit. Xyl. See also *ibid.* p. 1066.

(*k*) Anton. Medit. book x. sect. 6.

I shall mention some other passages which tend to illustrate this. "When you are disgusted, says he, with the impudence of any one, immediately ask yourself, Can the universe then be without the shameless? It cannot. Do not demand then what is impossible. For this is one of those shameless men who must needs be in the universe. Have the same question also at hand, when shocked at the crafty, the faithless, or the faulty in any respect." See *Ant. Medit.* b. ix. sect. 42. Here and in some other passages he speaks as if those persons and actions, which seem to us bad and vicious, were so connected with the whole, as to be necessary to the order of it, and without which the whole would run into confusion. And accordingly he supposes, that every event which comes to pass tends to the prosperity and felicity of Jupiter himself in his administration, who never would have permitted this event if it had not conducted to good. But if this be applied to particular bad men and particular wicked actions, as if these very men and these evil actions were necessary to the good order of the universe, and that the whole would be less perfect, and God less happy, if those particular persons had not existed, and those actions had not been done, this appears to me to be a false supposition, and dishonourable to the Deity. It is indeed for the good of the universe, and the glory of the divine administration, that God hath made reasonable creatures, endued with liberty and free agency; and that he dealeth with them as such, and consequently permits them to use their liberty even in doing evil actions. But it does not follow, that every particular action of theirs conduceth to good, and that God permitteth it for that reason. He may indeed in his infinite wisdom over-rule it to good, and bring good out of it; but in its own nature vice and sin is evil, and of a pernicious tendency: and therefore a righteous and holy God hath a just displeasure against it, and against the persons that commit it; and may, in an entire consist-

ency with his governing wisdom, righteousness, and goodness, punish them for it. And in like manner a good and virtuous man may and ought to conceive a just abhorrence of such evil actions, and may, without any imputation upon his goodness, be displeased with those that are guilty of them.

I acknowledge that there are many considerations, several of which are very properly urged both by Epictetus and Antoninus, which should dispose us not to be too rigorous in our censures upon the actions of others, and to put the most favourable construction upon them, which the circumstances of the case can possibly admit. But it is certainly wrong, under pretence of engaging men not to be angry at the faults of others, to endeavour to palliate the evil and deformity of vice and sin, and, to make such a representation of it as if it were true, and pursued to its genuine consequences, would shew that neither God nor man should be angry at it, and punish it. This seems to be the plain tendency of some of the passages which have been produced from Marcus Antoninus; though I am far from charging that excellent emperor and philosopher with intending those consequences, and indeed he has other passages of a different strain. For though he expressly asserts, as has been shewn, that “the particular wickedness of any individual hurts not another, it hurts himself only; and that no injury or evil action can be hurtful to the whole;” yet he elsewhere says, that “he who is guilty of an injury is guilty of an impiety: for since the nature of the whole has formed rational animals for being useful to one another, he who transgresses this her will, is thus guilty of impiety against the most antient and venerable of the gods.” By which he means what he so often calls the whole, and the nature of the whole. Here he seems plainly to suppose, contrary to what he elsewhere teaches, both that a man may hurt and do an injury to another of the same species with himself,



and that in so doing he is guilty of an impiety against the whole. And he there adds, that "he who willingly lies is guilty of impiety, in as far as by deceiving he does an injury; and he who lies unwillingly, in as far as his voice dissents from the nature of the whole; which as he had observed just before is truth, and the first cause of all truth."—He there also says, "that he who pursues pleasure as good, and shuns pain as evil, or who is not indifferently disposed to pain and pleasure, life and death, glory and ignominy, all which the nature of the whole regards as indifferent, is plainly guilty of impiety (1)."

I have insisted the more largely on the Stoical doctrine of forgiving injuries, and doing good to those that have used us ill, because it is that part of their doctrine in which they had been thought to come up to some of the sublimest precepts of morality as taught by our Saviour. I readily acknowledge that an excellent spirit breathes in several of their precepts on this head. But it appears from the observations which have been made, that by placing that duty in some respects on a wrong foundation, and enforcing it by motives which will not bear a strict scrutiny, and carrying it in some instances to an extreme, they weaken what they endeavour to establish. All that is just in this doctrine is taught in the Gospel, without running into extremes. The best and properest of the motives proposed by these philosophers are also there urged to engage us to bear with one another's faults and infirmities, and to forgive and do good to those that injure and offend us: besides which there are additional motives proposed, which are of the greatest weight. This duty is bound upon us by the express command and authority of God himself, who hath also made our forgiving other men their offences commit-

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(1) Anton. Medit. book ix. sect. 1.

ted against us, a necessary condition of our obtaining the forgiveness of our own offences from God. We are assured, that the unmerciful and unforgiving shall have no mercy shewn them at the day of Judgment (*m*). But especially the motives drawn from the wonderful love of God in sending his Son to suffer and die for us whilst we were yet enemies and ungodly, and the exceeding riches of his grace towards penitent sinners, together with the perfect example of a forgiving disposition in our most amiable and benevolent Saviour, must needs, where they are heartily believed, have a mighty force upon an ingenuous mind. And yet at the same time great care is taken to keep up a deep sense of the evil of sin, and an abhorrence of it in the minds of men, which is of the utmost consequence to the cause of virtue, and the good order of the moral world.

I shall conclude this part of the subject with observing, that the benevolent doctrine which hath been mentioned, seems not to have been carried by any of the Stoic philosophers so far as by Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus; both of whom lived after this doctrine had received its utmost improvement in the Gospel of Jesus, and was exemplified in many of the primitive Christians, who prayed for their enemies and persecutors with their dying breath. The more antient Stoics seem to have wrought up their scheme with greater rigour, and to have advanced maxims not very consistent with that humane and forgiving disposition so strongly recommended by Marcus Antoninus. Mr. Stanley in his excellent History of Philosophy gives it as part of the Stoical description of their wise man, or man of perfect virtue, that "he is not merciful or prone to pardon, remit-

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(*m*) James ii. 13.

ting nothing of the punishments inflicted by law, as knowing them to be proportioned to, not exceeding, the offence; and that whosoever sinneth, sinneth out of his own wickedness. A wise man therefore is not benign, for he who is benign mitigates the rigour of justice, and conceives the punishments inflicted by law to be greater than they ought; but a wise man knoweth the law to be good, or a right reason, commanding what is to be done, and what not (*n*).” Stanley refers for the proof of this to Laertius and Stobæus, but does not point out to the particular passages of those authors, which therefore I shall here mention. The reader may consult Laert. lib. vii. segm. 123. and Stobæus Eclog. Ethic. p. 178. edit. Plant. To which may be added what Seneca says concerning it, de Clem. lib. 2. cap. 6 et 7. where he endeavours to explain and apologize for the Stoical doctrine on this head (*o*). “Mercy, (says he,) is the vice or fault of souls that are too favourable to misery, which if any one requireth of a wise man, he may also require of him lamentations and groans.”—To shew that a wise man ought not to pardon he observes, that “pardon is a remis-

(*n*) Stanley’s Hist. Philosoph. p. 468. second edit. Lond.

(*o*) Misericordia vitium est animorum nimis miserix faventium: quam si quis a sapiente exigit, prope est ut lamentationem exigit, et in alienis funeribus gemitus. At quare non ignoscat dicam: constituamus nunc quoque, quid sit venia, ut sciamus dari illam a sapiente non debere. Venia est pænæ meritæ remissio—ei ignoscitur qui puniri debuit. Sapiens autem nihil facit, quod non debet, nihil prætermittit quod debet. Itaque pænam quam exigere debet, non donat. Sed illud quod ex veniâ consequi vis, honestiori tibi viâ tribuit.—Parcit enim sapiens, consulit et corrigit. Idem facit quod si ignosceret, nec ignoscit: quoniam qui ignoscit, fatetur aliquid se quod fieri debuit omisisse—ignoscere autem est, quæ judicas punienda non punire.

sion of the penalty which is justly due; and that a man is said to be pardoned, who ought to be punished: but a wise man does nothing which he ought not to do, and omits nothing which he ought to do: and therefore he does not remit the punishment which he ought to exact. Yet he grants that which is the effect of pardon, but does it in a more honourable way. He spares, counsels, and corrects; he does the same thing as if he did pardon, but does not pardon: because he that pardons acknowledges that he hath omitted something which he ought to have done.—To pardon is not to punish those things which you judge ought to be punished.”

We have a remarkable instance of the rigorous Stoical disposition in the famous Cato of Utica, who is cried up as a perfect model of Stoical virtue, and whose character is so exquisitely drawn by the masterly pen of Sallust: and one of the principal strokes in his character is this, that whereas Cæsar was admired for clemency and mercy, and his readiness to pardon, Cato was revered for his strict and inflexible severity: “*Severitas dignitatem addiderat.*” In Cæsar was found a sure refuge to the wretched; in Cato a certain vengeance to the guilty, “*malis perniciēs.*” *Sal. de Bel. Catalin. cap. lv.*



## CHAPTER XI.

The Stoical precepts with regard to self-government considered. They talk in high strains of regulating and subduing the appetites and passions; and yet gave too great indulgence to the fleshly concupiscence, and had not a due regard to purity and chastity. Their doctrine of suicide considered. Some of the most eminent wise men among the Heathens, and many of our modern admirers of natural religion, faulty in this respect. The falsehood and pernicious consequences of this doctrine shewn.

LET us next proceed to consider that part of the Stoical morals, which relates more immediately to ourselves, and the government of our appetites and passions. And with regard to this, nothing can make a more glorious appearance than the general principles of the Stoics, which every where breathe a contempt both of pleasure and pain. They prescribe the subduing and even the extinguishing the appetites and passions, and keeping them under the most perfect subjection to the laws of reason and virtue, and seem to aim at a greatness and dignity above the attainments of human nature. Yet if we closely examine their scheme in this respect, it will appear that it was in several instances defective, at the same time that in other instances it was carried to a degree of extravagance.

What has been already observed concerning the other philosophers, is equally true of the Stoics: that whatever they might say in general concerning temperance and continence, and against a love of sensual pleasures, yet in particular instances they gave greater allowances to fleshly lusts and the sensual appetite, than were consistent with the dignity of virtue and the rules of modesty and purity. Some hints of this were given before. That unnatural and detestable vice, which, as I have shewn, was commonly

charged upon the philosophers, was looked upon by the principal of the antient Stoics, Zeno, Chrysippus, and Cleanthes, to be an indifferent thing, as Sextus Empiricus informs us (*p*). And some of the chief leaders of that sect acted as if they really thought so. Zeno, the founder of the Stoics, allowed himself in that practice, and seems not to have had any scruple about it. Laertius indeed says, that he did it seldom and sparingly, *παιδαρίοις ἔχετο σπανίως* (*q*). But Antigonus Carystius, as cited by Athenæus, represents it as a common practice with him. Yet he was cried up as a man of exemplary virtue, and was remarkable for his gravity, austerity, patience, and temperance. The Athenians made a memorable decree in his favour, which may be seen in Laertius (*r*), in which they bear him testimony, that he had for many years taught philosophy in their city, and had formed the youth to virtue and sobriety, and had in his own life given an example to all of the most excellent things: his practice was agreeable to his doctrine, and therefore they decreed him a golden crown on the account of his virtue and temperance, and that a sepulchre should be built for him in the Ceramicus, at the public charge, and that the decree should be engraven upon two pillars. One may see by this, that the Heathens laid no great stress on chastity and continence, and that a man might pass for a very good man among them, who was guilty of great vices and impurities (*s*). From the instance now mentioned, it is a na-

(*h*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.

(*q*) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 13. See Menag. Observat. in Laert. p. 273. Edit. Wetsten.

(*r*) Laert. ubi supra, segm. 10, 11.

(*s*) Cicero, in one of the best of his works, joins Aristippus with Socrates, and represents them both as excellent and extraordinary persons of divine endowments, De Offic. lib. i. cap. 41.

tural inference, that if those rigid teachers of morals passed so wrong a judgment in a case like this, in which the law of nature seems to be very clear, this affords a plain proof that they were not to be depended upon for sound instructions in morality: and that if men were left merely to interpret the law of nature as they themselves thought agreeable to reason, without any other or higher guide, they might be apt to judge wrong in matters of great consequence. That famous Stoic Chrysippus, as we are told by Sextus Empiricus (*t*), held, that carnal commerce of father and daughter, of mother and son, of brother and sister, has nothing in it contrary to reason: for which he quotes Chrysippus's book *De Republica*. Laertius gives the same account, and quotes that book of Chrysippus for it, and says, that he asserts it in others of his treatises (*u*). The same thing is affirmed by Plutarch, who produces a passage from a work of Chrysippus, which is full to this purpose; where he argues from its being practised by the brutes, that there is nothing in it absurd or contrary to nature (*x*). Laertius farther acquaints us, that Chrysippus was censured for having in his commentary on the antient physiology, written obscene things concerning Jupiter and Juno, such as became prostitutes rather than gods (*y*). It appears also from

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Whatever may be said of Socrates, Aristippus is known to have allowed himself great liberties in all kinds of pleasures. In like manner Epictetus, as has been observed before, gives the highest encomiums to Diogenes, and sets him up as a perfect model of virtue.

(*t*) Pyrrhon. *Hypotyp.* ubi supra.

(*u*) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 188. Concerning the obscenity of Zeno and the Stoics, see Menag. ubi supra, p. 277, 278.

(*x*) Plutarch. de Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. ii. p. 1044. F. 1045. A. Edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620.

(*y*) Laert. ubi supra.

Laertius, that Zeno, in his book of the Commonwealth, a book much applauded, and Chrysippus, in a book of the same title, held the community of women, and in this they followed Plato and Diogenes (z). It is not therefore to be wondered at, that, as Sextus Empiricus informs us in a passage before cited, the Stoics thought it not absurd or unreasonable to cohabit with a harlot, nor to get a living by such practices. But it is but justice to Epictetus and Antoninus to observe, that none of these maxims appear in their writings. Epictetus compares adulterers to wasps, whom all men shun, and endeavour to beat down: and he advises to abstain, as far as possible, from familiarity with women before marriage; but he speaks of it in very soft terms, and does not expressly censure it as a fault, provided a man does it lawfully, i. e. by making use of prostitutes allowed by the laws (a).

This may suffice to shew, that the Stoics, notwithstanding their glorious pretences, were very loose both in their notions and practices, with regard to that purity which is of so great importance to the good order and dignity of the rational nature; and in several instances laid aside that modesty which seems to be implanted in mankind as a fence against those exorbitant fleshly lusts, which dishonour and defile the soul.

Another instance, in which the Stoics seem to have allowed too great indulgence to the sensual appetites, relates to the drinking to excess. Zeno himself is said to have been a great drinker (b): and Chrysippus died of a surfeit

(z) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 131.

(a) Epict. Dissert. book ii. chap. 4. et Enchirid. chap. 33. Miss Carter's translation.

(b) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 26. See also Menagius's Observations on Laertius, p. 276. edit. Wetsten.



of drinking sweet wine too freely at a sacrifice, to which he was invited by his scholars (c). Cato of Utica, who was thought to have arrived to the perfection of virtue, appears to have been addicted to it. Plutarch says, he often spent whole nights in drinking (d). Seneca, in his tract *De Tranquillitate Animi*, cap. ult. recommends not only "liberalior potio," a drinking more freely than ordinary on some occasions, but that "nonnunquam ad ebrietatem veniendum," we must sometimes carry it even to drunkenness: and he proceeds to make an apology for it. He observes, that Solon and Arcesilas indulged themselves in it. And he had said before, that Cato relaxed himself with wine, when he was fatigued with the cares of the public; and he afterwards owns, that he was charged with drunkenness. "Catonis ebrietas objecta est." But that it would be easier to prove that drunkenness is a virtue, than that Cato was guilty of a base or vicious thing. "At facilius efficiet, quisquis objecerit, hoc crimen honestum, quam turpem Catonem." The Stoics held that the wise man might be inebriated, but not overcome: his body might be disordered with wine, but it could not hurt his mind. They maintained, as Mr. Upton, cited by Miss Carter, observes, that their wise man was a perfect master of himself, when he was in a fever or in drink. And indeed Epictetus seems to represent it as the prerogative of a man arrived at the perfection of wisdom, that he is unshaken by error and delusion, not only when awake, but when asleep, when warmed with wine, when diseased with the spleen (e).

Another instance of great importance, relating to the duty incumbent upon us with regard to ourselves, and in

(c) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 184.

(d) See Plutarch, in the life of Cato Minor.

(e) Dissert. book ii. chap. 17. sect. 2.

which the Stoics fell into a dangerous error, was their doctrine of suicide or self-murder. Others of the philosophers were faulty in this respect, but it was in a particular manner the avowed doctrine of the Stoics. They asserted, that in some cases it was not only lawful, but a duty, for a wise man to dispatch himself. This they call *εὐλογον ἐξαγωγήν*, an exit agreeable to reason; when a man has a just cause of departing out of life. And Zeno the founder of the Stoic school declares, that it is reasonable for a man to put an end to his own life, not only for the sake of his friend, or of his country, but “if he be under any severe pain or torment, or is maimed in his limbs, or labours under any incurable disease. *Κἂν ἐν σκληροτέρα γένηται αλγηδόνι, ἢ πηρώσισιν ἢ νόσοις ἀνιάτοις (f).*” Cato, who was a rigid Stoic, declares in Cicero’s third book *de Finib.* that it was the duty of the man, whose conveniencies in life exceeded the inconveniencies, to continue in life: but where the inconveniencies he was under were greater than the conveniencies, or he foresaw that it would be so, it was his duty to depart out of life. “*In quo plura sunt quæ secundum naturam sunt, hujus officium est in vitâ manere: in quo autem sunt plura contraria, aut fore videntur, hujus officium est e vitâ excedere.*” And he expressly affirms, that “it is often the duty of a wise man to depart out of this life, though he be most happy, when it can be done opportunely: for this is to live agreeably to nature.” “*Sæpe officium est sapientis desciscere a vitâ, cum sit beatissimus; et id opportunè facere possit: quod est convenienter naturæ vivere (g).*” It is observable that Cato, who teaches this doctrine, lays the foundation of his moral system in this, that every animal has from its birth a natural desire of preserving itself in its

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(f) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 130.

(g) Cicero *de Finib.* lib. iii. cap. 19.

natural state, and an aversion to its destruction, and every thing that tends to it (*h*). In this he followed the principles of the chief masters of the Stoic sect. And since they made the perfection of virtue to consist in living agreeably to nature, how could it be consistent with it for a man to destroy himself, which they themselves own to be contrary to nature, is hard to see. Seneca in this, as well as other instances, is not always consistent with himself, but he gives large allowances to suicide. Speaking of the wise man, he saith, that "if he meets with many things that are troublesome to him, and disturb his tranquillity, he dismisses himself out of life; and this he does, not merely in the last necessity, but as soon as ever fortune begins to be suspected by him." *Si multa occurrunt molesta, et tranquillitatem turbantia, emitit se: nec hoc tantum in necessitate ultimâ facit, sed cum primum illi cœperit suspecta esse fortuna (i).*" And in his little tract, *Cur bonis Viris mala fiant*, the design of which is to vindicate providence with respect to the evils which befall good men, he bestows the highest encomiums upon Cato's killing himself, and extols it as a most glorious action. And in the conclusion of that tract, he introduces God as declaring to men, that he had opened a way for them to escape from their calamities; and had made nothing easier for them than to die, which was a short and ready way to liberty. This seems to have been a fashionable doctrine, that spread much among the Romans, especially those of learning and quality. The elder Pliny represents a timely or seasonable death as one of the greatest benefits which nature hath conferred upon mankind, and that the best of it is, that it is what every man

(*h*) Cicero de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 5.

(*i*) Sen. Epist. 70. and he argues the same thing more largely in his 58th Epistle.

may procure for himself (*k*). And Pliny the younger mentions it as a sign of a great soul to judge by reason, and to deliberate upon it, when it is proper to stay in life, and when to go out of it (*l*).

But what I would principally observe is, that Epictetus and Antoninus, who seem to have carried the doctrine of morals to a greater height than any of the other Stoics, plainly admit this doctrine. It is true that the former of these excellent philosophers has some passages, which, at first view, have a different aspect. "My friends, (saith he,) wait for God, till he shall give the signal, and dismiss you from this service; then return to him. For the present be content to remain in this post where he has placed you—Stay. Depart not inconsiderately (*m*)."

And again in another place, where he has some noble strains of resignation to God, he saith; "Is it thy pleasure I should any longer continue in being? I will continue free, of a generous spirit, *γυναῖος*, agreeably to thy pleasure.—But hast thou no farther use for me? Fare thou well! I have staid thus long for thy sake alone, and no other; and now I depart in obedience to thee.—Whatever post or rank thou shalt assign me, like Socrates, I will die a thousand times rather than desert it. If thou shalt send me, where men cannot live conformably to nature, I do not depart from thence in disobedience to thy will; but as receiving my signal of retreat from thee. I do not desert thee: heaven forbid! but I perceive thou hast no use for me (*n*)."

But if we compare these with other passages of that author, we shall find, that after all this shew of an entire re-

(*k*) Hist. Natural. lib. xxviii. cap. 1. in fine.

(*l*) Plin. Epist. lib. i. ep. 22.

(*m*) Epict. Dissert. book i. chap. 9. sect. 4.

(*n*) Ibid. book iii. chap. 24. sect. 5.



signation to the divine will, the signal he professes to wait for from God for his departure, may be any great calamity which befalls him: and of this he himself is to be the judge. So that in effect he allows a man to go out of life when he thinks fit, in order to free himself from the pressure of some grievous trouble. "Is the house in a smoke?" saith he: "if it be a moderate one I will stay; if a very grievous one, I will go out. For you must always remember that the door is open." ἡ θύρα ἡνοικίται (*o*). Again, "if suffering be not worth your while, the door is open; if it be, bear it (*p*)."  
And he gives it as a general rule, "Remember the principal thing, that the door is open. Do not be more fearful than children; but as they, when the play does not please them, say, '*I will play no longer*;' so do you, in the same case, say, '*will play no longer*;' and go: but if you stay, do not complain (*q*)."  
To the same purpose, speaking of the calamities of life, such as the death of children, loss of worldly substance, imprisonment, and the like, he saith, "Jupiter hath made these things to be no evils; and he hath opened you the door, whenever they do not suit you. Go out man, and do not complain (*r*)."  
I shall only add one passage more from Epictetus; "Hanging is not unsupportable: for, as soon as a man has learned that it is reasonable, εὐλογον, he goes and hangs himself (*s*)."

The emperor Marcus Antoninus was in this, as well as most other points, of the same sentiments with Epictetus. Speaking of the things which a man ought to consider,

(*o*) Epict. Dissert. book i. chap. 25. sect. 3.

(*p*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 1. sect. 3.

(*q*) Ibid. book i. chap. 24. sect. 4.

(*r*) Ibid. book iii. chap. 8. sect. 2. See also book iv. chap. 1. sect. 12.

(*s*) Ibid. book i. chap. 2. sect. 1.

one is, that "he should judge well of this very point, whether he should depart out of life, or not (*t*).<sup>1</sup>" Where he supposes, that it dependeth upon a man's own determination to depart out of life, when he himself judges it reasonable to do so. And he elsewhere allows a man, if he be hindered from living in that way that he should chuse, "to go out of life," *ταῦτα καὶ τῆ ζῆν ἐξελθεῖ*. And he adds, "If my house be smoky, I go out of it: and why is this looked upon as a great matter (*u*).<sup>2</sup>" He elsewhere puts the supposition of a man's being grieved, because he is hindered by a superior force from accomplishing some good design, without which life is not worth retaining: and he advises him in that case to quit life with the same serenity as if he had accomplished it; *ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐκ τῆ ζῆν εὐμένως*; "go therefore out of life well pleased (*x*).<sup>3</sup>" And in another passage to the same purpose, he seems to allow men, if they cannot attain to that constancy and magnanimity which they aspire after, "to depart out of life altogether, yet not angry, but with simplicity, liberty, and modesty, having at least performed this one thing well in life, that they have in this manner departed out of it (*y*).<sup>4</sup>" And again he says, "who hinders you to be good and single-hearted? Only do you determine to live no longer, if you are not to be such a man. For reason in that case requires you should (*z*).<sup>5</sup>" Gataker in his annotations on the Meditations of Antoninus, of whom he was a great admirer, passes a just censure on this doctrine of the Stoics, as little agreeable to piety. "Dogma pietati parùm consentaneum." And I wish some notice had been

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(*t*) Anton. Medit. book iii. sect. 1.

(*u*) Ibid. book v. sect. 29.

(*x*) Ibid. book viii. sect. 47.

(*y*) Ibid. book x. sect. 8.

(*z*) Ibid. sect. 32.

taken of it in the ingenious and learned notes on the Glasgow translation of Antoninus, and which seem to have been designed to set the sentiments of that great emperor and philosopher in a proper light.

Agreeable to this doctrine of the Stoics was the practice of some of the chief leaders, and greatest men of that sect. Zeno, as Diogenes Laertius informs us, when he was very old, fell as he was going out of his school, and broke his finger, which being very painful to him, he strangled himself (*a*). Or, as Lucian has it, voluntarily put an end to his life by abstaining from all food (*b*). Cleanthes did the same on account of a painful disorder in his gums (*c*). What Cato did is well known: and Plutarch says, that the laws enacted by the Stoa, had induced many wise men to kill themselves, that they may be more happy (*d*).

Here is a remarkable instance of the deficiency of the Stoic morality in a capital point of great importance. What rendered this doctrine peculiarly wrong and absurd in the Stoics was, that they held virtue to be perfectly sufficient to its own happiness: that the wise man is happy in the highest degree under the greatest outward calamities and sufferings: and that bodily pains and diseases, poverty, reproach, &c. which the world calls evils, are really no evils at all: and yet they taught, that a wise man may, and sometimes ought to put an end to his own life, to deliver himself from them: i. e. to put an end to a life which is perfectly happy, in order to free himself from things, which, according to them, are no evils, and cannot in the least disturb or di-

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(*a*) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 28.

(*b*) Lucian. in Macrobian. Oper. tom. II. p. 473.

(*c*) Laert. lib. vii. et Lucian ubi supra.

(*d*) Plut. de commun. notit. advers. Stoic. Oper. tom. II. p. 1063. C.

minish his happiness. Plutarch exposes them on this head with a great deal of justice and smartness. Epicurus, who had his wise man as well as the Stoics, agreed with them in opinion, that it was proper for a man to put an end to his own life when he judged it reasonable to do so, or when the pains and miseries of life became insupportable (*e*). And in this he was more consistent with himself than the Stoics; since he looked upon pain to be the greatest evil, and therefore might have recourse to death to get rid of it: though, as he most unaccountably pretended to the secret of being completely happy under the severest pains and torments, he ought not, one should think, to have advised any man by putting an end to this present life, to put an end to his happiness, since he had no other life in view. The Indian Gymnosophists acted in this matter upon nobler principles, though they were much mistaken in the application of them. Remarkable is the account Porphyry gives of them in his fourth book de *Abstinentiâ*. After having honoured them with the highest encomiums, that they were famous and just persons, and *θεοειδεις*, divinely wise, he tells us, that “they endure the term of life with reluctance, as a necessary ministry to nature, and hasten to get their souls at liberty from their bodies; and when they appear to be in health, and have no evil upon them to urge them to it, they freely depart out of this life, telling others before-hand of their intention, who far from hindering them account them happy, and give them commissions to their deceased friends. After which they give up their bodies to the fire, that the soul may be separated as pure as possible from the body, and thus singing hymns they expire (*f*).”

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(*e*) Cic. de Finib. lib. i. cap. 15.

(*f*) Porphy. de Abst. lib. iv.



This is certainly a great abuse of a noble principle, the belief of an immortal happiness in a future state: and it shews how apt the best and wisest among the Heathens were to fall into mistakes in very important points of morality; since they who were looked upon as having arrived at an extraordinary degree of wisdom, purity, and virtue, really committed self-murder, under the notion of an eminent and heroic act of piety (g). How greatly therefore should it recommend the scheme of religion laid down in the holy Scriptures, which at the same time that it raiseth good men to the most lively hopes of a blessed immortality, and ani-

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(g) Many authors have taken notice of the famous Indian philosopher Calanus, who voluntarily burned himself before Alexander the Great. And the same customs continue among many of the Pagan Indians to this day. We are told concerning the disciples of Fo in China, that many of them having a disrelish for the present state of existence, seek the means of procuring a better as soon as possible, by putting an end to their own lives\*. The Bramins esteem those to be heroic and purified souls who condemn life and die generously, either by casting themselves from a precipice, or leaping into a kindled pile, or throwing themselves under the holy chariot-wheels, to be crushed to death, when the Pagods are carried about in procession through the town†. And it is related of the ancient inhabitants of the Canary Islands, who worshipped the sun and stars, that on solemn festivals kept in honour of the deity they adored, in a temple seated on the brink of a mountain, they threw themselves down into a vast depth, out of a religious principle, dancing and singing, their priests assuring them that they should enjoy all sorts of pleasures after such a noble death‡.

\* See a tract of a Chinese philosopher in Du Halde's History of China, vol. III. p. 272. English translation.

† Xavier's Life, by F. Bouhours, cited by Millar in his History of the Propagation of Christianity, vol. II. p. 138.

‡ Millar, *ibid.* p. 132.

mates them to a patient and chearful enduring the greatest sufferings and torments, and even death itself, when called to it in a just cause, and for the defence of truth and righteousness, forbids us to put a voluntary end to our own lives! In this as well as other instances it furnisheth us with the most exalted idea of true piety and virtue, without running into any unwarrantable extremes.

It is true, that there were some great philosophers among the Pagans who did not approve suicide. Seneca, even where he argues in favour of it, acknowledges that there were some among those that professed wisdom, who denied that any violence was to be offered by men to their own lives; and affirmed that it was a wicked thing for any man to be the murderer of himself. “*Invenies etiam professos sapientiam, qui vim offerendam vitæ suæ negant, et nefas judicant ipsum interemptorem sui fieri (h).*” Pythagoras taught that a man was placed in a certain watch or post, which it was his duty not to desert without the orders of the great commander, that is God. “*Vetat Pythagoras,*” says Cicero, “*injussu intemperatoris, id est Dei, de præsidio et statione vitæ decedere (i).*” This was also the doctrine of Socrates and Plato, as appears from his *Phædo*. Socrates there observes, that the gods take care of us, and that we may be regarded as their possession and property; and that as any man would take it ill, if any of his slaves should dispatch himself that he might escape his service, it is reasonable to suppose in like manner, that no man ought to depart out of life, till God has laid a necessity upon him to do so; as he did then upon Socrates. And he there also represents it, as what was taught in the *ἀπορρήτα*, or mys-

(h) Sen. epist. 70.

(i) Cic. Cato Major, cap. 20.

teries, that we are here in a kind of prison or custody; and that no man ought to break out of it, or run away without a lawful discharge (*k*). And indeed it is not to be wondered at that this doctrine was taught in the mysteries, considering that they were under the direction of the civil magistrates, and that suicide is pernicious to society. And accordingly Virgil, in his sixth *Æneid*, which, as a celebrated writer has shewn, was probably formed upon the plan of the mysteries, represents those that offered violence to their own lives, as in an unhappy condition in the subterraneous regions.

“Proxima deinde tenent mæsti loca, qui sibi lethum  
Insontes peperere manu, vitamque perosi  
Projecere animas Quam vellent æthere in alto  
Nunc et pauperiem, et duros perferre labores!”

*Æneid. VI. ver. 434, &c.*

The Attic laws appointed, that the hand of the self-murderer should be cut off, and that it should be buried apart (*l*). Among the Thebans, those who had killed themselves were burned with infamy (*m*). The Roman civil laws ordered, that those “qui malâ conscientâ sibi manus intulerant,” should not be lamented by their relations, and that their wills should not be valid. And yet they gave too much allowance to suicide: for, as Ulpian has it, “Quod si quis tædio vitæ, vel valetudinis adversæ impatientiâ et jactatione, ut quidam philosophi, mortem sibi consciverunt, in ea causâ sunt, ut eorum testamenta valeant (*n*).” So that if they kill-

(*k*) Plato Opera, p. 377. D. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(*l*) Sam. Petit. in Leg. Attic. lib. vii. tit. 1. p. 522.

(*m*) Zenobius ex Aristot. apud S. Petit. *ibid*.

(*n*) Ulpian in Leg. VI. De injusto, rupto, irrito facto Testamento, et Paulus Jurisconsultus in Lege 45. De Jure Fisci.

ed themselves through weariness of life, or from impatience under sickness, or from a principle of vain-glory, as some philosophers did, they were to be excused from the penalty. To which the famous lawyer Paulus adds as a reason for suicide, the shame of being in debt, "*pudorem æris alieni.*" That great magistrate and philosopher Cicero seems to be not quite consistent with himself in what he delivereth upon this subject. In the passage cited above from his *Cato Major*, he approves the opinion of Pythagoras. But still more clearly in his dream of Scipio, where he makes Paulus tell Scipio, "Except God shall free thee from the bonds of this body, there can be no entrance for thee into this place," i. e. into heaven. And he adds, "That therefore it was his duty, and that of all pious persons, to endeavour to keep the soul in the body as in custody, and not to depart out of this life without his orders who gave us our souls, lest we should seem to have quitted the work and office which God hath assigned us (o)." To the same purpose, in the first book of his *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero says, that God forbids us to depart hence, and to desert our station, except he commands us to do so: but then he adds, that "when God himself gives a just cause of departure, then a wise man may go joyfully out of his prison, as if dismissed by law and the orders of the magistrate." And this he supposes to be there the case of Cato. This is to give a licence to suicide in several cases, and leaves it to men themselves to in-

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(o) "*Nisi Deus istis te corporis vinculis liberaverit huc tibi aditus patere non potest.—Quare et tibi et piis omnibus retinendus est animus in custodiâ corporis: nec injussu ejus, à quo ille est nobis datus, ex hominum vitâ migrandum est, ne munus humanum assignatum à Deo defugisse videamur.*" In *Som. Scip. cap. 3. Cicer. Oper. Gronov. p. 1408. Lugd. Bat.*



terpret the circumstances they are in as an express order from God to destroy themselves; which may be of pernicious consequence (*p*). In his Offices, speaking of men's acting suitably to their different characters, their stations, and geniuses, he says, that in consequence of this, one man may be obliged to make away with himself, whilst another, though like him in other circumstances, may be obliged to the contrary. And he vindicates Cato's killing himself, as what was suited to his character, and that it became him rather to die, than to see the face of the tyrant (*q*). And in the fifth book of his Tusculan Disputations, having spoken of death as a safe harbour and refuge from all calamities, he declares, that in his opinion "that law ought to be observed in life, which obtained among the Greeks in their banquets, either let a man drink, or go off and quit the company.—So (says he) when you cannot bear the injuries of fortune, you may by fleeing from them leave them behind you."—"Mihi quidè in vitâ servanda videtur illa lex quæ in Græcorum conviviiis obtinet, aut bibat, aut abeat.—Sic injurias fortunæ, quas ferre nequeas, defugiendo relinquo (*r*)."  
 I shall only add one passage more. It is in one of his epistles, where, writing to his friend Papirius Pætus, he seems to plead for it, as in some cases not only lawful but commendable, and praises Cato's killing himself as a glorious action. "Ceteri quidè, Pompeius, Lentulus tuos, Scipio, Afranius, fœdè perierunt: at Cato præclarè. Jam istuc quidem si volumus licebit (*s*)."  
 This is a remarkable instance of the uncertainty the ablest of the Heathen

(*p*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 30.

(*q*) De Offic. lib. i. cap. 31.

(*r*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 40, 41.

(*s*) Epist. lib. ix. epist. 18.

philosophers were under in matters of very great consequence: and that even where they had a notion of what was agreeable to right, they were ever varying for want of more certain guidance on which they might entirely depend (*t*).

The same uncertainty appears in several of the moderns, who profess to be governed by the law of reason and natural religion. Some of them have pleaded for the lawfulness of suicide. The noted author of the *Oracles of Reason*, Mr. Blount, practised it on himself: and this practice was justified in the preface of that book: though the writer of that preface, Mr. Gildon, afterwards saw his error, and retracted it in a book he published against the deists, intituled, *The Deist's Manual*. Some foreign writers have gone the same way. Among the *Lettres Persanes*, there is one which is particularly designed to apologize for suicide. This is also the intention of a tract published in France not long ago, intituled, *Question Royale*. And in a periodical paper lately published at Paris, *Le Conservateur*, an attempt is made to shew that suicide is not contrary to reason, though it is acknowledged to be contrary to religion. The arguments in these and some other treatises of the like kind are judiciously answered, and the case of suicide largely considered, in the second tome of *La Religion Vengée, ou Re-*

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(*t*) The Platonists themselves were not quite agreed with relation to the doctrine of suicide. There are some passages of Plotinus, which seem to allow a good man in some cases to put an end to his own life. And even Plato sometimes expresses himself in a manner that looks that way. Ficinus, who was well acquainted with the writings of both those philosophers, and was strongly prejudiced in their favour, leaves it undetermined, what were their sentiments in this matter. Ficinus in Plotin. p. 84.

futation des Auteurs impies, from lettre 10, to lettre 18. à Paris 1757.

I cannot quit this subject, which appears to me to be of great importance, without observing, that for a man voluntarily to put an end to his own life, is an act of impiety against God, the Author of life, and who alone hath an absolute dominion over us. It is not unfitly compared, as was before hinted, by some celebrated antients, to a soldier's deserting his post and station, without the leave of his commander or general. Nor can it be pretended, that when we meet with great adversities in life, it is a call from God to quit it; on the contrary, it is a call to the exercise of patience, resignation, and fortitude. The author of our beings has so constituted our bodies, that as it is not in our power to continue in life as long as we please, so neither does it depend upon ourselves to put an end to it, except by an act of violence to our nature, which it is not lawful for us to commit. If that law of God which commands us not to kill, obliges us not to take away the life of another man by our own private will, without lawful authority, much more does it oblige us not to murder ourselves when we think fit: since the duty of preserving our own lives is more directly and immediately incumbent upon us than the preserving the lives of others. And hence the right a man hath to kill another, when it is necessary to his own defence. Suicide is also contrary to the duties a man owes to the society. It is mistake to imagine that any man is absolutely "*sui juris*" at his own disposal. He is not only under the dominion of God the Supreme Lord, to whom he is accountable, but as a member of society bears a relation to his king, his country, his family, and is not at liberty to dispose of his life as he himself pleases. If this were the natural right of one man, it would be so of another: and so every man would have a right to put an end to his own life, whenever he thinks proper, and

of this, he himself is to be the judge. And if he has a right to kill himself when any great evil befalls him, or when he is under the apprehension of it, why might he not have an equal right to kill another who he apprehends has brought evil upon him, or who he fears will do it? And what confusion this would produce in society, I need not take pains to shew. To all which it may be added, that for a man to kill himself, because he is under the apprehension or pressure of some grievous calamity, is, whatsoever may be pretended to the contrary, inconsistent with true fortitude. It is an argument of a pusillanimous soul, that takes unwarrantable methods to flee from a calamity; whereas he ought nobly and patiently to bear it, which is true magnanimity and fortitude. The poet says well: "It is an easy thing to condemn life in adversity: he acts a courageous part, who can bear to be miserable."

"Rebus in adversis facile est contemnere vitam:  
Fortiter ille facit, qui miser esse potest."

Upon the whole, the practice we have been considering, and which was justified, and in several places even prescribed, by many of the philosophers, especially by the Stoics, the most eminent teachers of morality among the antients, is a practice deservedly rendered infamous by our laws, as being a murder committed by a man upon his own person, in opposition to the most sacred obligations of religion, and to the rights of the community to which he belongs, and to the strongest instincts of the human nature, wisely implanted in us by the Author of our beings, as a bar to such inhuman practices.

The observations which have been made are sufficient to shew that the Stoics are not to be absolutely depended upon in matters of morality. This will further appear from a dis-



tinct examination of the main principles on which their moral system is founded, and on the account of which they have been thought to be the most strenuous advocates for the cause of virtue, and to have carried their notion of it to the noblest height.

## CHAPTER XII.

The Stoics professed to lead men to perfect happiness in this present life, abstracting from all consideration of a future state. Their scheme of the absolute sufficiency of virtue to happiness, and the indifferency of all external things considered. They were sometimes obliged to make concessions which were not very consistent with their system. Their philosophy in its rigour not reducible to practice, and had little influence either on the people or on themselves. They did not give a clear idea of the nature of that virtue which they so highly extolled. The loose doctrine of many of the Stoics, as well as other philosophers, with regard to truth and lying.

THE professed design of the whole Stoical scheme of morality was to raise men to a state of complete felicity. This, indeed, was what all the philosophers pretended to; and Cicero represents this as the principal thing which induced men to spend so much time and pains in the study of it. (*u*). But none of them made such glorious pretences this way as the Stoics, nor spoke of virtue in such high terms as they did. They maintained, that virtue alone, without any outward advantages, is sufficient to a life of perfect happiness in this present state. And to support this scheme, they asserted that all outward things are indifferent, and nothing at all to us: ἐὶν πρὸς ἡμᾶς. Indifferent things, τὰ ἀδιάφορα, as Laertius represents the sense of the Stoics (*x*), neither profit nor hurt us; of this kind are life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, riches, honour, nobility; and their contraries, such as death, sickness, pain, deformity, poverty, dishonour, &c.

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(*n*) Cic. de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 3. Et Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 1.

(*x*) Laert. lib. vij. segm. 105, 106.

And again, that those things are indifferent, which are neither good nor evil, neither to be desired nor shunned, conducing neither to happiness nor unhappiness. In this sense, all things are indifferent, which are between virtue and vice. No philosopher ever carried the Stoic notion in this matter farther than Epictetus. It is a principle which runs through his whole system, and most of his magnificent precepts are built upon it, that nothing is good or evil, but what is in the power of our own wills: that none of the things without us are either profitable or hurtful: that neither life nor death, health nor sickness, bodily pain nor pleasure, neither affluence nor poverty, honour or ignominy, neither the having wife, children, friends, possessions, nor the want or loss of them, are to be the objects of our desires or aversions, they are nothing to us, nor of the least moment to our happiness.

Agreeable to this is the idea the Stoics give of him whom they call a wise man: that he has all his goods within himself, wants nothing, never fails of obtaining what he desires, is never subject to any disappointment; because he never has a desire or aversion to any thing but what is in his own power; nor can any outward calamity touch him, whether of a public or private nature. And what is especially to be observed, they assert, that he is perfectly happy even in the extremity of torments and sufferings. This is the principle upon which they chiefly valued themselves, and were admired by others. Cicero represents their opinion thus, concerning the wise or virtuous man: "That suppose him to be blind, infirm, labouring under the most grievous distemper, banished from his country, bereaved of his children or friends, in indigence, tortured upon the rack, he is in that instant, and in those circumstances, not only happy, but happy in the highest degree (*y*).” And this happiness, they suppos-

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(*y*) "Sit idem [sapiens] cæcus, debilis, morbo gravissimo ad-

ed to be wholly in a man's own power, and entirely owing to virtue itself: that it is sufficient merely by its own intrinsic force and excellence to produce and secure an independent felicity, without any foreign support, and abstracting from all consideration of a future state or recompence. This was in reality making an idol of their own virtue, and erecting it into a kind of divinity. And accordingly their scheme, as was before observed, sometimes betrayed them into a way of talking which bordered upon profaneness; as if their wise man was equal in virtue and happiness with God himself. The Peripatetics agreed with the Stoics in affirming, that virtue is the greatest good, and that a wise and good man is happy under the severest bodily torments. But they would not allow, that in that case he was most happy, or happy in the highest degree. Thus it is that Cicero represents their sense, in the fifth book of his *Tusculan Disputations*, where he argues pretty largely against those who supposed that a wise and good man is "happy" in such circumstances, but not "most happy:" "*beatum esse, at non beatissimum (z).*" He thinks, that he who wants any thing that is requisite to an happy life, cannot with any propriety be said to be happy at all: "*Si est quod desit, ne beatus quidem est:*" that happiness includes the full possession and enjoyment of all good things, without any evil joined to it or mixed with it: and that if any thing relating to the body or outward circumstances were good, a wise man could never be sure of being happy, because these outward things are not in his own power (*a*). In this the Stoics seem to have had the advantage

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fectus, exsul, orbis, egens, torqueatur eculeo: quem hunc appellat Zeno? Beatum, inquit, etiam beatissimum." *De Finib. lib. v. cap. 28. p. 427. edit. Davis.*

(z) See particularly *Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 8. et cap. 14. et seq.*

(a) *Ibid. cap. 10. p. 365. edit. Davis.*



of the Peripatetics. They both agreed that wise and good men are happy in this present state: for in their disquisitions on this subject, a future state of happiness was never brought into the account. They also agreed, that this happiness was in every wise and good man's own power. But the Stoics plainly saw, that it was not in any man's power to obtain external advantages when he pleased, or to attain to a perfect freedom from all outward pains and troubles. And therefore they would not allow that external things are either good or evil, or have the least concernment with the happiness of human life. This, though contrary to nature and experience, yet was a consistent scheme, which that of the Peripatetics was not. Cato, in arguing against the Peripatetics, urges, that if they allowed pain to be an evil, it would follow that a wise man could not be happy when tortured upon the rack: whereas, according to those who denied pain to be an evil, a wise man kept the happiness of his life unviolated in the severest torments (*b*). He there takes it for granted on all sides, that a wise man is happy on the rack, and treats it as an absurdity to suppose the contrary. And indeed, this seems to have been a principle common to all the philosophers, and it was looked upon as shameful to deny it. Hence it was, that Epicurus himself, that he might not come behind them in a glorious way of talking, though in his system pain was the greatest evil, asserted that a wise man would be perfectly happy in Phalaris's bull. Theophrastus, indeed, one of the most eminent of the Peripatetic philosophers, was sensible of the absurdity of this. He thought,

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(*b*) "An verò certius quicquam potest esse quam illorum ratione qui dolorem in malis ponunt, non posse sapientem beatum esse cum eculo torqueatur? Eorum autem, qui dolorem in malis non habent, ratio certè cogit, uti in omnibus tormentis conservetur vita beata sapientis." Apud Cic. de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 13. p. 239. edit. Davis.

as Cicero informs us, that "great external calamities, pains and torments, were absolutely incompatible with a happy life: and that it was a contradiction to suppose, that the same man could be happy, and oppressed with many evils." Yet, as Cicero intimates, he durst not speak his mind clearly, and was blamed by all the other philosophers, for seeming to suppose, though he did not directly affirm, that a wise man could not be happy on the rack, or under the severest torments (c). What led the philosophers in general into this way of talking, was with a view to extol the high advantages of their philosophy as the only infallible way to make men completely happy, and raise them above all outward evils. This is the account Cicero gives of what philosophy makes profession of, that "every man who obeys its dictates shall be always armed against the attacks of fortune, and shall have in himself all the helps necessary to a good and happy life: and finally, that he shall be always happy (d)." Such were the glorious pretences of the Pagan philosophy. Their whole scheme was founded on the supposition of attaining to the perfection of virtue and happiness in this present state: and this involved them in inextricable difficulties, how to reconcile those high pretences with experience, and the present appearances of things.

It is manifest, that the virtue of the best men is at present mixed with weaknesses and defects. Or, if it were never so perfect in itself, it meets with many obstacles in a

(c) *De Finib. lib. v. cap. 26. p. 261. Et Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 9. p. 361. edit Davis.*

(d) "Nam quid profitetur [philosophia]? O dii boni! perfecturam se, qui legibus suis paruisset. ut esset contra fortunam semper armatus. et omnia præsidia haberet in se benè beatèque vivendi, ut esset semper denique beatus." *Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 7. p. 357.*

world full of vice and disorder, and cannot exert itself as it would, nor produce the effects it is naturally fitted to produce, and which it would actually produce in a better state of things. Many are the temptations and snares to which our virtue is here exposed, and which it requires a constant care and vigilance to guard against, as well as to keep all our appetites and passions under a perfect subjection to the law of religion and reason. And as we are united to others by many social ties, their calamities often by a tender sympathy become our own; and in such cases and circumstances, even our virtue and benevolence itself, except we cast off all human affections, will be apt to produce uneasy feelings. To which may be added, the many hindrances arising from the body, its pains, weaknesses, diseases, and languors; which by the present constitution of our nature, cannot but greatly affect our minds, and often have such an influence, as to fill the whole soul with black and dismal ideas. And this has frequently happened to virtuous and excellent persons under the power of an habitual prevailing melancholy. Or, if we put the case of a good man's being exposed to a series of the most bitter persecutions and sufferings for the cause of truth and righteousness, to pretend that in these circumstances he is perfectly happy by the mere force and sufficiency of his own virtue, without any foreign assistances or any future hopes, is a visionary scheme, contrary to reason and nature. So far is it from being true, that human virtue is of itself alone sufficient to render a man completely happy in such circumstances, that it would not hold true, if such a supposition could possibly be admitted, even with respect to the divine nature. That God is perfectly happy is a principle acknowledged by all that believe a Deity. But who would account him perfectly happy, though never so perfect in moral excellence, if he were subject to pain or external violence, or to those inconveniencies and sufferings

to which good men are liable in this present state, and which often by the allowance of the Stoics themselves, make it reasonable for them to put an end to their own lives? And indeed there cannot be a more manifest proof of the vanity of their pretences than this, that they who professed so absolute a contempt of all external things, and declared in their solemn addresses to God that they were able to bear whatsoever he should see fit to lay upon them, frequently recommend self-murder as a remedy to free them from external calamities. "It is remarkable," says Miss Carter, "that no sect of philosophers ever so dogmatically prescribed, or so frequently practised suicide, as those very Stoics, who taught that the pains and sufferings which they sought to avoid by this act of rebellion against the decrees of Providence, were no evils. How absolutely this horrid practice contradicted all their noblest principles of resignation and submission to the Divine Will, is too evident to need any enlargement (*e*)." Indeed this seems to shew that their affected contempt of all outward things, was, for the most part, little more than a pompous ostentation of high-sounding words. Epicurus himself, as hath been already observed, spoke as magnificently of a wise man's being happy in the severest torments, as the Stoics did. It is no hard matter to put on an air of grandeur in the expressions. But where there is no prospect of a future recompence or happiness, this magnanimity has not a solid foundation to support it, or can only have an effect on a very few minds of a particular constitution.

The Stoics after all their high talk of the absolute indifferency of all external things, found themselves obliged to make some concessions which were not very consistent

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(*e*) See Miss Carter's introduction to her translation of Epictetus, sect. 26.



with the rigor of their principles; and which involved them in seeming contradictions. Plutarch takes great advantage of this for exposing them in his two treatises of the Contradictions of the Stoics, and of Common Conception against the Stoics. Cato in Cicero's third book *de Finib.* after having laid it down as a principle, that that only is good which is honest, and that only is evil which is base; "*Solum esse bonum quod honestum est, et id malum solum quod turpe;*" sets himself largely to shew, that with regard to other things, which the Stoics would not allow to be either good or evil, or to contribute in the least to render life happy or wretched, there is, notwithstanding, a real difference between them: so that some of them were *æstimabilia*, as he calls them, that is, fit to have some value put upon them, others the contrary; and he positively affirms, as what cannot be doubted, that of those which they called middle or indifferent things, i. e. neither good nor evil, some are to be chosen or taken, others to be rejected (*f*): and that some of these things are *secundum naturam*, according to nature, others are contrary to nature. The same account of the Stoical doctrine is given by Laertius (*g*). Cicero observes in his first book of laws, that what the Peripatetics, and those of the Old Academy, called *bona*, good things, were called by the Stoics, *commoda*, commodious or convenient things; what the former called *mala*, evil things, the latter called *incommoda*, incommodious or disagreeable: from which he concludes, that they changed the names of things, when the things themselves continued the same (*h*).

(*f*) "Non dubium est, quin ex his quæ media dicimus, sit aliud sumendum, aliud rejiciendum." Apud Cic. *de Finib.* lib. iii. cap. 18. p. 254.

(*g*) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 102.

(*h*) Cic. *de Leg.* lib. i. cap. 13. et cap. 21.

And in his fourth book *de Finib.* he undertakes to prove at large, that the Stoics and Peripatetics, if narrowly examined, differed more in the manner of expression than in the thing itself. (*i*) But the same great author seems to assert in his *Offices*, that there was a real difference between them, and gives the Stoical system the preference to that of the Peripatetics (*k*).

If there was a real difference between the Stoics and Peripatetics, it seems to have consisted principally in this, that though the Peripatetics allowed, that virtue is the highest good, yet they held that the commodities of life, which they called good things, contributed in some degree to human happiness. But the Stoics would not allow that these things were of the least moment to happiness, and asserted that with respect to the happiness of life, all outward things were nothing, and of no concernment to us at all. This indeed was necessary to support their system concerning the absolute felicity and independency of their wise and virtuous man. But it is contrary to nature and experience (*l*). Nor can I well conceive how the Stoics could allow, as they did, external things to be commodious for us, or the contrary, if they had no influence at all to pro-

(*i*) See particularly *de Finib.* lib. iv. cap. 6. et cap. 8. et 9.

(*k*) *De Offic.* lib. i. cap. 24. et lib. iii. cap. 4.

(*l*) Aristotle's opinion, which was generally followed by the Peripatetics, was, that though virtue is the greatest good, yet outward good things are necessary to happiness: for that nature is not self-sufficient, the body must be in health, and men must have the necessaries and conveniencies of life. See his *Ethic. ad Nicom.* lib. 10. cap. 9. oper. tom. II. p. 140. C. edit. Paris 1629. et *Magn. Moral.* lib. 2. cap. 8. *ibid.* p. 184. D. In this matter Posidonius and Panætius, two eminent Stoics, quitted the doctrines of their sect. They denied that virtue alone is sufficient for beatitude, and affirmed that it requires the assistance of health, strength, and necessaries. *Laert.* lib. vii. segm. 128.

mote or to obstruct human happiness. These philosophers themselves did not pretend to deny, that man is an animal compounded of body and soul: and from thence it follows that that which is good or evil for the compound, may be properly said to be good or evil to man in his present state. Marcus Antoninus says, that "pain is either an evil to the body, and then let the body pronounce it to be an evil, or to the soul: but the soul can maintain her own serenity and calm; and not conceive pain to be an evil (*m*)."

But if the body pronounces pain to be an evil, the soul as united to the body feels and pronounces it to be so. Cato in explaining the doctrine of the Stoics, says, "It is manifest that we have a natural abhorrence of pain:" "*Per-spicuum est naturâ nos a dolore abhorrere (n).*" And how the Stoics could consistently acknowledge this, and yet not own it to be an evil, or assert that men may be perfectly happy under it, is hard to see. Cicero observes that the Stoics said, that "pain is sharp, troublesome, odious, hard to be borne, contrary to nature," but would not call it evil: and he adds, speaking to Cato, "you deny that any man can have true fortitude, who looks upon pain to be an evil: but why should not that man have as much fortitude, as he that owns it to be grievous, and scarce to be endured, as you yourself grant it is? For timidity arises not from names, but from things (*o*)."

(*m*) Anton. lib. viii. sect. 28.

(*n*) Cicero de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 19. p. 257. edit. Davis.

(*o*) "*Dicunt illi [Stoici] asperum esse dolere, molestum, odiosum, contra naturam, difficile toleratu. Tu autem negas fortem esse quenquam posse, qui dolorem malum putat. Cur fortior sit, si illud, quod tute concedis, asperum et vix ferendum putabit? Ex rebus enim timiditas, non ex vocabulis sequitur.*" Cicero de Finib. lib. iv. cap. 19. p. 321, 322.

The Stoical maxims must be acknowledged to have an air of greatness; but they would have done more service to the cause of morals, if instead of denying that their wise or virtuous man ever suffers any evil, or is liable to any disappointment, they had represented it as one of the noblest exercises of virtue to bear evils and disappointments with a becoming temper of mind. Antoninus indeed argues, that "that which may equally befall a good man or a bad man, can be neither good nor evil (*p*).<sup>1</sup>" According to this way of representing it, no evil can befall a good man. And this, if true, would at once remove the objection against Providence, drawn from the evils to which good men are obnoxious in this present state. But except mankind could be persuaded out of their natural feelings, such a way of arguing will be of little force. It is still undeniably true, that good men are often exposed to great sufferings and calamities which are very grievous to nature, nor does the refusing to call them evil at all alter their nature, or render them less grievous and troublesome. The true remedy is not by denying them to be so, but by offering such considerations as are proper to support the mind under them, the most powerful of which are drawn from the hope of eternal happiness in a future state. But this did not enter into the Stoical system.

The same great emperor and philosopher says, "when- ever you imagine that any of those things, which are not in your own power, are good or evil to you, if you fall into such imagined evils, or are disappointed of such good, you must necessarily accuse the gods, and hate those men who, you deem, were the causes, or suspect will be the causes of such misfortunes (*q*).<sup>2</sup>" He frequently expresses

(*p*) Anton. Medit. book iv. sect. 39.

(*q*) Ibid. book vi. sect. 41. Glasgow translation.



himself to this purpose, and so does Epictetus. But it by no means follows, that if we look upon any of the things which befall us to be evils, i. e. to be severely troublesome, painful and grievous (for this is all that is really meant by calling them evils, since no man pretends that they are evil in the moral sense) that therefore we must necessarily curse or accuse God and Providence: for we may upon solid grounds be persuaded, that God sends those evils upon us, or permits them to befall us, for wise ends, and will in the issue over-rule them to our greater benefit. And indeed, if we do not look upon them to be evils, there is no proper exercise for patience and resignation, which consisteth in bearing evils with equanimity and fortitude. Nor does it follow, that if we regard these things as evils, we must necessarily hate those men, whom we suppose to be the authors or causes of them. We may, and in many cases cannot help looking upon the injuries we suffer from others to be indeed evils and injuries when we feel them to be so, and yet we may in obedience to the will of God, and from a prevailing goodness of heart, forgive the authors of those injuries, and even render good for evil. This is one of the most eminent acts of virtue which is powerfully recommended and enforced in the Holy Scriptures. Whereas upon their scheme there is properly no such thing as forgiving injuries, or doing good for evil, since a good man cannot be hurt or injured, nor suffer any evil: or, if it were a real evil or injury that he suffered, he must necessarily, according to their way of arguing, curse the man that did it, and accuse Providence for permitting it.

Some of the Stoical principles were so much out of the way of common sense and conception, that when they came into the world, and engaged in public offices and affairs, they could not put in practice their own maxims: but, as Plutarch observes, they then spoke and acted as if they looked upon external things to be good or evil, and to be

things which are of concernment to the happiness or unhappiness of human life: he produces a passage from Chrysippus, in which he says, that a wise man will so speak in public, and so order the commonwealth, as if riches, and glory, and health were good things. And Plutarch very justly takes this to be in effect a confessing that his doctrine about the absolute indifferency of all external things was contrary to true policy, and could not be reduced into practice (*r*). There are several passages of Epictetus, by which it appears, that those maxims of the Stoics, which make so glorious an appearance in their books, had little influence upon the people, or even upon those philosophers themselves. "Shew me," says he (*s*), "that I may see what I have long sought, one who is truly noble and ingenuous, shew me either a young or old man?" The nineteenth chapter of his second book is concerning those who embraced philosophy only in word. He there says; "shew me a Stoic, if you have one.—You can indeed shew a thousand that can repeat the Stoic reasonings. Shew me some person, formed according to the principles which he professes. Shew me one who is sick and happy, in danger and happy, dying and happy, exiled and happy, disgraced and happy. Shew him me; for, by heaven, I long to see a Stoic. Shew me one who is approaching towards this character: do me the favour: do not refuse an old man a sight which he hath never yet seen." Here he complains, that he never yet saw a true Stoic, one that acted up to their principles. But what he represents as impracticable, and no where to be found, the seeing a man happy in sickness, danger, exile, disgrace and death, was actually verified in many of the primitive

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(*r*) Plutarch. Oper. tom. II. p. 1034. Epictet. Dissert. book ii. chap. 16. sect. 2

(*s*) Ibid. chap. 19. sect. 3.

Christians. Not that they looked upon these things, in the Stoical language, to be perfectly indifferent, and no evils at all; but because they were persuaded that the *sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed*: and that *this light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17. Supported and animated by these glorious hopes, and by the gracious assistance of God's Holy Spirit, they *gloried even in tribulation*: They were, as St. Paul expresseth it, as *sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; as having nothing, but possessing all things*; and performed things which would otherwise have seemed impracticable. The reader may consult the passages referred to at the bottom of the page, which are admirable to this purpose (*t*).

There is one farther observation which I would offer concerning the Stoical doctrine of morals, and that is, that after all the high encomiums which they and others of the antient philosophers bestowed upon virtue, and the glorious things they ascribed to it, they did not give a clear idea of the nature of that virtue they so highly extolled. They laid it down as the foundation of their moral system, that every animal has a desire to preserve itself in its natural state: and that the chief good of man, and the proper office of virtue, is to live agreeably and conformably to nature; "*congruenter naturæ convenienterque vivere*," as Cato expresses it in the account he gives of the doctrine of the Stoics (*u*). Laertius gives the same account of their doc-

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(*t*) See Matt. v. 11, 12. Acts v. 40, 41. xvi. 25. Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. viii. 17. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39. 2 Cor. iv. 7. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. Heb. x. 34.

(*u*) Apud Cic. de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 5, 6, et 7.

trine, that the end of man is to live agreeably to nature, *ὁμολογούμεως τῇ φύσει ζῆν*. This principle that virtue and happiness consists in living according to nature was common to most of the philosophers. But as they differed in their accounts of nature, and what was agreeable to it, so they differed in the idea they formed of virtue. The Epicureans, as well as the Stoics, placed virtue and happiness in living conformably to nature. But as they supposed the desire of pleasure to be the first principle of nature in men and all animals, they made every thing else subordinate to it; and this was the central point of their moral system. So it was also of the Cyreniacs: but they understood pleasure in a yet grosser sense than the Epicureans did. Many of the philosophers, in judging of what is according to nature, took in the brute animals into the account. The Stoics themselves sometimes did so, and upon this principle some of them undertook to justify incestuous copulations. But for the most part the Stoics took nature in a higher sense, and the idea they formed of living according to nature was like the idea of their wise man, little conformable to fact and experience. If we judge of the human nature by what it appears to be in its present state in the generality of mankind, when they come to the use and exercise of their reason, we shall not have a very advantageous notion of it. The nature of man, as it now is, cannot justly be set up as a proper rule or standard of virtue, but must itself be regulated by a higher law, by which we are to judge of its rectitude, and of its corruptions and defects. And therefore the ablest of the Stoics in judging of what is according to nature, were for considering the nature of man as in a conformity to the law of reason, and the nature of the whole. Diogenes Laertius has mentioned the several explanations given by the principal Stoics, of what it is to live



according to nature (*x*). And they seem generally to have agreed with Chrysippus, that as our natures are parts of the whole, so to live according to nature, or to live virtuously, is for a man to live according to his own and the universal nature. I think this way of talking is not well fitted to furnish us with clear notions. And I believe it will be acknowledged, that it would be of no great advantage to the bulk of mankind to send them for direction in their duty to the knowledge of their own nature, and that of the universe. And it is what the wisest of the human race, if left to themselves, could scarce attain to, if taken in the extent in which Cato, after the Stoics, explains it. He affirms, "that no man can judge truly of things good and evil, without knowing the whole reason of nature, and even of the life of the gods, and whether the nature of man harmonizes or not with the universal nature (*y*)."<sup>1</sup> What an extensive knowledge is here required in order to a man's having a just discernment of his duty, and passing a right judgment on things good and evil! How much more easily and certainly might we come to the knowledge of our duty, if it were directly and expressly determined by a revelation from God himself!

Another notion, which the Stoics, as well as other philosophers, advanced of virtue, and which may probably be thought to give a clearer idea of it, is, that they made it equivalent to what the Greeks called τὸ καλόν, the Latins "*honestum*." And this seems to be the notion of it which Cicero principally insists upon, in his celebrated books *De*

(*x*) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 86, 87, 88.

(*y*) "*Nec verò potest quisquam de bonis et malis verè judicare, nisi omni cognitâ ratione naturæ, et vitæ etiam deorum, et utrùm conveniat necne, natura hominis cum universâ?*" Apud Cicero de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 22. p. 267. edit. Davis.

Officiis. And he describes the honestum to be, "that which is justly to be praised for its own sake, abstracting from all view to profit and reward: which is not so much to be known by this definition, as by the common judgment of all men, and the studies and practices of the best men, who do many things for this only reason, that it is decent, right, and honest, though they do not see any advantage that will follow upon it (z)." He here supposes the honestum to be that which is approved by the judgment of all men, and especially by the wisest and best of men as decent and laudable. And I readily acknowledge, that there is a beauty and decency in some actions and affections, which, in the common judgment of mankind, are excellent and praise-worthy; and that if the human nature was in a sound and uncorrupt state, this might extend very far, and have a great effect: and even taking mankind as they are, it is undoubtedly in many instances of signal use. But it is manifest from experience, and the observation of all ages, that the moral sense and taste is greatly weakened and depraved by erroneous opinions, vicious affections, false prejudices, and worldly selfish interests, so that it is by no means to be depended upon as a safe and universal rule in morals. This has been sufficiently shewn in the first chapter of this treatise. It cannot be denied, that whole nations differ with regard to their notions of what is virtuous, decent, and praise-worthy. And whereas Cicero seems here to refer

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(z) "Honestum id intelligimus, quod tale est, ut detractâ omni utilitate, sine ullis præmiis fructibusque, per se ipsum possit jure laudari, quod quæ sit, non tam definitione quàm usus, intelligi potest (quanquàm aliquantùm potest) quàm communi omnium judicio, et optimi cujusque studiis atque factis: qui per multa ob eam ueram causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident." *De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 14. p. 122. Davis.*

particularly to the judgment of the wise and good; for the knowledge of the τὸ καλόν, or honestum; what shall we think of Zeno, Chrysippus, and others of the principal Stoics, who saw no indecency, nothing contrary to the τὸ καλόν, or beauty of virtue, in the most abominable and unnatural impurities, or the most incestuous mixtures (*a*), or in the community of women approved by them, by the Cynics, and the famous Plato; or in the exposing and destroying weak and sickly children, which this last mentioned eminent philosopher, as well as Aristotle and others, advised and prescribed; and which was in use in many of the best policied states? To this may be added, that practice of suicide, which the Stoics and others not only allowed, but in several instances recommended and extolled as laudable and glorious.

From the account that has been given of the Stoical system of morals, and which is accounted the most complete that Pagan philosophy could furnish, it appears that it could not be depended upon as a sufficient guide in moral duty. Besides the instances already mentioned, I shall mention one more, which deserves to be taken notice of; and that is, that many of the philosophers, and the Stoics among the rest, were very loose in their doctrine with regard to truth and lying. They thought lying lawful, when it was profitable, and approved that saying of Menander, that a lie is better than a hurtful truth.

Plato says, he may lie who knows how to do it, ἐν δέοντι καιρῷ, in a fitting or needful season (*b*). In his fifth Republic, he lays it down as a maxim, that it is necessary for rulers to make use of frequent lying and deceit, for the

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(*a*) The same may be said concerning the Persian magi, who were famous among the antients for their wisdom.

(*b*) Apud Stob. serm. 12.

benefit of their subjects, *σύνχρη τῷ ψεύδει καὶ ἀπάτῃ χρῆσθαι* (c). And in his third and fourth books de Republ. he advises governors to make use of lies both towards enemies and citizens, when it is convenient. In his second Republic, he allows lying in words on some occasions, but not lying in the soul, so as to believe a falsehood. And in this he was followed by the Stoics, who held that a wise man might make use of a lie many ways, *ἀνευ συγκαταθέσεως*, without giving assent to it, as in war, in prospect of some advantage, and for many other conveniences and managements of life, *κατ' ἄλλας οἰκονομίας τῇ εἰς πόλλας* (d). Maximus Tyrius saith, there is nothing venerable, *εἰδὲν σιμνὸν*, in truth, if it be not profitable to him that hears it. He adds, that "a lie is often profitable or advantageous to men, and truth hurtful (e)." This is one instance among many that might be mentioned, several of which have been already produced, to shew how apt they were to mistake in judging of what is truly venerable, decorous, and laudable, which yet they made one of the principal characters of the *τὸ καλόν*, or honestum. Plato mentions it as an old saying, and which he approves, that that which is profitable is *καλόν*, honourable, and that which is hurtful is base, *ὅτι τὸ μὲν ὠφελιμὸν καλόν, τὸ δὲ βλαβερὸν αἰσχρὸν* (f). Since, therefore, both he and others of the philosophers held that a lie in many cases is profitable, they must hold that a lie is often *καλόν*, honestum. But that excellent

(c) Platon. Opera, p. 460. D. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(d) Stob. Eclog Ethic. lib. ii. p. 183. edit. Plantin.

(e) Max. Tyr. dissert. 3. p. 35. edit. Oxon. 1678.

(f) Plato Republ. v. Oper. p. 459. D. E. edit. Lugd. It is to be observed, that Plato there makes use of this maxim, to vindicate the women's appearing naked at the public exercises, which he looked upon to be decent, because in his opinion it was profitable for the commonwealth.



emperor and philosopher Marcus Antoninus, from the generosity of his nature, judged better in this, as well as several other instances, than most of the other philosophers. He says, that a wise and good man should say and do nothing falsely and insincerely, *διεψευσμένως καὶ μετ' ὑποκρίσεως*, that the mind should be just, and the speech so as never to tell a lie; *λόγος ὁὖτος μήποτε διαψεύσασθαι*; and that he who lies willingly is guilty of impiety (*g*). Some of our modern admirers of the law of nature fall short of that great philosopher in this respect, and seem to allow nothing comely or venerable in truth, in itself considered, but to judge of it merely by profit or convenience (*h*).

I have now finished the enquiry I proposed into the state of the antient Heathen world, with regard to a rule of moral duty. I have considered the doctrine of morals as taught by their most eminent legislators and philosophers in those nations which were most renowned for learning and knowledge. It might have been expected, that as all the main doctrines of morals are built upon the most solid grounds, and when duly considered, are agreeable to right reason, some of those great men would have furnished the world with a complete rule of moral duty, which might be safely depended upon. But it appears that in fact it was otherwise, and that the most celebrated of them mistook or perverted the law of nature in matters of great importance (*i*). I think, therefore, it must be acknowledged that

(*g*) Anton. Medit. book ii. sect. 17. and book iv. sect. 33. and 49. and book ix. sect. 1.

(*h*) See particularly what Dr. Tindal says upon it, whose doctrine on this head is fully considered. Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation, Vol. I. chap. vii.

(*i*) No particular notice has been here taken of the philosophers of the Alexandrian school, or of the sacred succession, as they

Mr. Locke was not in the wrong in asserting, that "whatever was the cause, it is evident in fact, that human reason, unassisted, failed in its great and proper business of morality. It never from unquestionable principles, by clear deductions, made out an entire body of the law of nature (*k*).” The same excellent author, who was himself a great master of reason, and far from denying it any of its just prerogatives, observes, that “it should seem by the little that has been hitherto done in it, that it is too hard a task for unassisted reason, to establish morality in all its parts, with a clear and convincing light (*l*).” But whatever he supposed concerning this, what he afterwards observes cannot be reasonably denied, that “be the cause what it will, our Saviour found mankind under a corruption of manners and principles, which age after age had prevailed, and must be confessed was not in a way or tendency to be mended—The rules of morality were in different countries

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were called, who flourished a considerable time after Christianity had made its appearance. Some of them had noble notions of morality. But they cannot be properly brought as proofs of what unassisted reason can do in morals: since it is generally agreed among the learned, that they were acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and with the doctrines and morals of Christianity, of which they made their own advantage, though they would not acknowledge the obligation. But as to this, I would refer the reader to what has been observed in the first volume of this work, at the latter part of the 21st chapter.

(*k*) See Mr. Locke’s Reasonableness of Christianity, in his Works. Vol. II. p. 532. 3d edit.

(*l*) Mr. Locke, *Ibid*. There is a remarkable passage to the same purpose in an author who has shown himself far from being prejudiced in favour of Religion. *Mor. Philos.* Vol. I. p. 143, 144. I have already cited this passage in the Preliminary Discourse, p. 7, 8.

and sects different, and natural reason no where had nor was like to cure the defects and errors in them (m)." This could only be effectually done by a Divine Revelation, and how admirably Christianity was fitted to answer this excellent end, I shall now proceed to shew.

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(m) Locke, ubi supra, p. 534.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The nations were sunk into a deplorable state of corruption, with regard to morals, at the time of our Saviour's appearing. To recover them from their wretched and guilty state to holiness and happiness, one principal end for which God sent his Son into the world. The Gospel Dispensation opened with a free offer of pardon and salvation to perishing sinners, upon their returning to God by faith and repentance, and new obedience: at the same time the best directions and assistances were given to engage them to a holy and virtuous practice. The Gospel scheme of morality exceeds whatsoever had been published to the world before. A summary representation of the excellency of the Gospel precepts with regard to the duties we owe to God, our neighbours, and ourselves. These precepts enforced by the most powerful and important motives. The tendency of the Gospel to promote the practice of holiness and virtue, an argument to prove the Divinity of the Christian Revelation.

FROM the account which hath been given it appears, that the Pagan nations, even those of them which were most learned and civilized, were sunk about the time of our Saviour's coming into the most deplorable corruption in regard to morals. God had in his wise and good providence done a great deal to preserve among men a sense and knowledge of their duty, but they had neglected and abused their advantages. By the influence of vicious appetites, corrupt habits and customs, and wrong opinions, their moral sense and taste was become greatly depraved. The divine laws which had been originally given to mankind, and the traditions relating to them, were very much obscured and defaced. What passed among them for religion, and which ought to have been the greatest preservative to their morals, was amazingly corrupted. Their manifold idolatries, the rites of their worship, and the examples of their deities, contributed not a little to the general depravity. The laws of their respective countries were by no means fitted to be



an adequate rule of morals, and in many instances allowed and even prescribed things not consistent with the purity of religion and virtue. The same may be said of their philosophers and moralists: many of them did hurt by their maxims and examples. The best of them were deficient in material points of duty; and they generally countenanced the people in their idolatries, and gave a great loose to sensual impurities. And even where they were right, and gave good instructions, their finest sentiments had little weight, and passed only for beautiful speculations of this or that philosopher, but were not looked upon as laws obligatory upon mankind. They had no divine authority to plead, or, if they had pretended it, were not able to produce any proofs or credentials to shew that God had sent them to declare his will.

In this condition the state of things grew worse and worse: and at the time when the Gospel was published, all kinds of wickedness and dissoluteness of manners had arrived to a most amazing height. This is represented in a very striking manner in the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. And the account he gives is attested and confirmed, even with regard to the most shocking part of the description, the monstrous and unnatural vices and impurities which prevailed among them, by undeniable testimonies of the most celebrated Pagan writers, philosophers, poets, and historians. The extreme corruption of manners in the Heathen world is represented in several other parts of the New Testament. Hence they are said to be "dead in trespasses and sins." And St. John gives this emphatical description of their state, "The whole world lieth in wickedness (n)."

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(n) 1 John v. 19. See also Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. iv. 18, 19. v. 6, 7.

Justly might God have left the nations to perish in their sins, but in his great mercy he had compassion upon them in this their wretched and lost estate. At the time which had been marked out by a series of illustrious prophecies, and which was in itself the fittest, and when the great need men stood in of an extraordinary interposition in the cause of religion and virtue was most apparent, it pleased God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, to send his own Son into the world to save and redeem mankind, and to recover them from their guilty and corrupt state to holiness and happiness. God had for a long time suffered the nations to walk in their own ways, without making any new and extraordinary discoveries of his will to them. But now he commanded all men every where to repent. The wrath of God was revealed from heaven in the Gospel against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The clearest discoveries were made of the great evil of those idolatries, that wickedness and corruption of all kinds in which mankind were then generally involved. The consequence of this must have been, that when they were thoroughly convinced of the evil of their ways, a sense of their guilt would be apt to fill them with awful thoughts of the divine vengeance justly due to them for their manifold offences. It pleased God, therefore, in his sovereign grace and wisdom, so to order it, that the Gospel Dispensation opened with a free and universal offer of pardoning mercy. They were assured, that upon their returning to God through Jesus Christ, the great Saviour whom he had provided, by an humble faith and sincere repentance, their past iniquities should be forgiven them, they should be received into the divine favour, and

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11, 12. 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. 1 Thess. iv. 5. and other places to the same purpose.

admitted to the most glorious hopes and privileges. At the same time, the most holy and excellent laws and precepts were given them for instructing and directing them in their duty. And God condescended to deal with them in the way of a gracious covenant, which contained the most clear and express promises of eternal life and happiness as the reward of their sincere persevering obedience. What happy tidings were these to a guilty apostate world, to creatures ready to perish in their sins! And what a glorious display was made of the divine goodness and love to mankind!

What the subject I am now upon leads me particularly to consider, is the excellency of the Gospel morality, as delivered to us in the Sacred writings. The Scriptures of the Old Testament are full of admirable precepts and instructions relating to the duties which God requireth of man. These had been published long before, and as the Jews and their Scriptures were generally dispersed, it is reasonable to conclude that they were of use to many of the Gentiles who had access to them. But the Jews were for the most part very unpopular, and kept separate by distinct rites and usages, and their doctors had by wrong interpretations wrested and perverted the true sense of the law and prophets. And even with regard to several of the moral precepts, they had, as our Saviour charges them, made the law void by their traditions, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. One valuable end therefore of his coming with such illustrious proofs of his divine authority and mission, was to clear the true sense of the law and the prophets, to confirm and establish the moral precepts, and to carry them to a still higher degree of excellence, and give them additional light and force. As he came to instruct men in the right knowledge of God, and the nature of true religion, so also to set before them a complete rule of moral duty in its just extent, enforced by all the sanctions of a divine authority, and by the most powerful and engaging

motives, and beautifully exemplified in his own sacred life and practice. To consider the evangelical scheme of morality at large, as it justly deserves, would furnish matter for a distinct volume, and could not well be brought within the compass of this work. But it may be of use to set before the reader a summary of it under three principal heads, as relating to the duties required of us with respect to God, our neighbours, and ourselves, which St. Paul expresses by our living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

The most eminent part of our duty, which is the first in order and dignity, and gives a binding force to all the rest, is the duty we more immediately owe to God. And as a right idea of the Supreme Being lies at the foundation of the duties we owe him, so it is not possible to form more just, more noble, and sublime ideas of the Deity than are held forth to us in the sacred writings, both of the Old Testament and of the New. All the admirable descriptions of the divine nature and attributes, which are to be found in the law and the prophets, do also belong to the religion of Jesus, who hath farther confirmed and improved them. We are taught that there is one only living and true God, who existeth of himself from everlasting to everlasting: that he is a spirit, invisible to a mortal eye, and who is not to be represented by any corporeal form: that he is possessed of all possible perfection, and in him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (*o*). That his greatness is unsearchable, his understanding is infinite, his power almighty and irre-

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(*o*) The passages of Scripture relating to the Divine Nature and Attributes are too many to be here enumerated: I can only point to a very few Exod. iii 14. Deut. vi. 4. Psal. xc. 2. cii. 26. John iv. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 16. Jam. i. 17.



sistible (*p*). That at the time which seemed most fit to his own wisdom and goodness he made heaven and earth, and all things that are therein; he only commanded and they were created; that he continually upholdeth all things by the word of his power: and in him all things consist (*q*). That he exerciseth an universal government and Providence over all the orders of beings which he hath created. And particular care is taken to inform us, that though he be infinitely exalted above our highest conceptions, and though it be a condescension in him to regard the most exalted of created beings, yet his care extendeth to the meanest of his creatures. But we are in an especial manner assured, of what it most nearly concerneth us to know, that his providential care extendeth to the individuals of the human race: that he is the author of all the good things we enjoy, and that all the events which befall us are under his direction and superintendency (*r*). That he filleth heaven and earth with his presence, and is not far from any of us, seeing it is in him that we live, move, and have our being: that all things are naked and opened unto him, and there is not any creature that is not manifest in his sight (*s*).

But above all we are there instructed to form right notions of God's illustrious moral perfections: that he is infinitely wise, and directeth all things in the best and fittest manner (*t*): and though sometimes clouds and darkness are

(*p*) Psal. cxlv. 3. cxlvii. 5. Job xi. 7. xii. 13.

(*q*) Gen. i. 1. 3, &c. Psal. xxxiii. 6, 7, 8, 9. cxlviii. 5. Nehem. ix. 5, 6. Acts xiv. 15. Col. i. 16. Revel. iv. 11.

(*r*) Psal. ciii. 19. Job iv. 18. Psal. cxiii. 5, 6, 7. Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. Matth. vi. 26. 30. x. 29, 30. 1 Sam. ii. 6, 7, 8.

(*s*) Psal. cxxxix. 7—12. Jerem. xxiii. 24. Acts xvii. 27, 28. Heb. iv. 13.

(*t*) Deut. xxxii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 17.

about him, and we cannot penetrate into the reasons of his dispensations, yet he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works: that he is of invariable faithfulness and truth, and that it is impossible for God to lie (*u*). That he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works: and he is continually doing good even to the sinful human race (*x*). That he is the God, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles: and that with him there is no respect of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him (*y*). The mercy of God towards penitent returning sinners is frequently declared both in the Old Testament and in the New. But it is especially in the Gospel that all the riches of divine grace are represented in the most engaging manner, and the wonderful love of God towards mankind is most affectingly displayed in the methods of our redemption and salvation through Jesus Christ. And therefore that most amiable description is there given of him, that "God is love (*z*)."  
 Yet at the same time, that the riches of the divine grace and mercy may not be abused as an encouragement to licentiousness, he is every where represented in Scripture as infinitely just and holy: his goodness, as there described to us, is not such a soft indulgence as might encourage sinners to transgress his laws with impunity, but is always in conjunction with the most perfect wisdom and righteousness. His just displeasure against sin, and the punishments he will inflict on obstinate impenitent sinners, are represented in a striking manner. And we are assured that

(*u*) Psal. xcvi. 2. cxlv. 17. cxvii. 2. Tit. i. 2. Heb. vi. 18.

(*x*) Psal. cxlv. 9. Matth. v. 45. Acts xiv. 17.

(*y*) Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Psal. lxxxvi. 9. 15. Is. lv. 7. Rom. iii. 29. Acts x. 34, 35. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

(*z*) 1 John iv. 8, 9, 10. 16.

he will judge the world in righteousness, and render to all men according to their deeds, not merely their outward actions, but the secret dispositions of their hearts (*a*).

Such is the idea which is there given us of God and his glorious perfections and attributes: the noblest that can be conceived, and the best fitted to produce worthy affections and dispositions towards him. And accordingly as in the Gospel we are instructed to form the most becoming notions of the Deity, so we have the most excellent directions given us as to the duties we should render to him.

We are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength: this our Saviour represents as the first and great commandment (*b*). And what an amiable idea does this give us of religion, as flowing from and comprehended in this divine principle! It includes our having the highest esteem and admiration of his incomparable perfections, and especially of his marvellous grace and goodness: that we must rejoice and delight ourselves in him, and seek for our highest happiness in him alone (*c*). That we must be animated with a pure zeal for his glory, and must prefer the pleasing and honouring him before the gratifying our fleshly inclinations, or promoting our worldly interests, all which we must be ready to abandon when called to do so for his sake, or which is the same thing, for the cause of truth, real religion, and righteousness (*d*). Divine love is the source of a holy, ingenuous, delightful obedience. Hence it is declared, that

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(*a*) Eccles. xii. 14. Acts xvii. 31. Rom. ii. 9, 10. 16.

(*b*) Deut. vi. 5. Matth. xxii. 37, 38.

(*c*) Psal. xxxvii. 4. lxxiii. 25. Phil. iv. 4.

(*d*) Matth. v. 10. x. 37.

“this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments (*e*).”

But then we are also taught, that this love to God, in order to its being of the right kind, must be accompanied with a holy fear of his Divine Majesty: a temper highly becoming reasonable creatures, towards the Supreme and absolutely perfect Being, our Almighty Maker, our Sovereign Lord, and most righteous Governor and Judge. This is of such importance, that the fear of God and real piety are often made use of as terms of the same signification. To serve God with reverence and godly fear is represented as essential to a true and acceptable worship (*f*). And where this prevails, it will be the most effectual preservative against sin and wickedness, it will produce in us the profoundest submission to his divine authority, it will make us afraid, above all things, of offending him, and will raise us above the base and inordinate fear of men (*g*).

It is also required of us, that we exercise a firm trust and confidence in him, and an entire unreserved resignation to his will, from a steady persuasion of his just dominion over us, his power, wisdom, goodness, and all-sufficiency (*h*). On him we are encouraged to cast all our burdens and cares, to commit ourselves wholly to his disposal, and to acquiesce in all his providential dispensations, being satisfied that he ordereth all things really for the best, and will cause all events to work together for good to them that love him (*i*).

(*e*) 1 John v. 3.

(*f*) Deut. x. 20. Heb. xii. 28.

(*g*) Prov. xvi. 6. Eccles. xii. 13. Luke xii. 4, 5. 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15.

(*h*) Psal. lxii. 8. Is. xxvi. 4. 1 Tim. vii. 17.

(*i*) Psal. xxxvii. 4, 5. Psal. lv. 22. 1 Pet. v. 7. Rom. viii. 28.



We are every where taught in Scripture that an habitual regard to God, to his presence and approbation, must influence our whole conduct. This is expressed by our walking before the Lord, and walking worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing. We are directed to refer all to God; to make it our constant care and endeavour to glorify him in the world with our bodies and spirits which are his; and are commanded whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God (*k*).

As God is the great original of all perfection, and excellence, and his moral attributes are in an especial manner very clearly revealed to us in the Sacred Writings, so it is there represented as a noble part of our duty to aspire after a conformity to him in them, as far as he is imitable by such frail creatures as we are. It is required of us that we endeavour to be holy as he is holy, perfect (as far as our limited capacities will allow) as our Heavenly Father is perfect, and to be followers or imitators of God as becometh dear children (*l*). And for this we have peculiar advantages under the Gospel, as we have his moral excellencies and perfections, his holiness and purity, his love and goodness, his faithfulness and truth, his condescending grace and mercy, most beautifully exemplified in his well beloved Son, the unspotted image of his own excellence. It is then we best resemble God, when the same mind is in us that was in Christ Jesus.

With respect to the worship we are to render to the Supreme Being, we are required to worship him who is an infinite Spirit in spirit and in truth. The worshipping false gods, and the worshipping the true God under cor-

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(*k*) Gen. xvii. 1. Psal. cxvi. 9. Col. i. 10. 1 Cor. vi. 20. x. 31.

(*l*) Matt. v. 48. Eph. v. 1, 2. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

poreal images and representations, is most expressly forbidden (*m*). The multiplicity of idol deities which were adored in the Pagan world, whilst the only true God was neglected, together with the cruel, the impure, and absurd rites of their worship, are rejected. And under the Gospel we are also freed from the various rites and sacrifices prescribed in the law of Moses, which though originally instituted for wise ends, well suited to that time and state of things, yet were burdensome in the observance, and not so fitted to that more spiritual and perfect dispensation which our Saviour came to introduce. There is a noble purity and simplicity in the Gospel-worship as represented in the New-Testament; and the sacred rites and ordinances there prescribed are few in number, and excellent in their use and significancy. And at the same time great care is taken to instruct us, that no external rites will be of any advantage or avail to our acceptance with God without real holiness of heart and life.

As to the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, we have both the best directions given us in the sacred Writings, and the noblest patterns set before us of a pure and elevated devotion. We are there taught to celebrate and adore his transcendent excellencies and perfections, as shining forth in his wonderful works; and in the revelations of his word, and to give him the praise that is due to his great and glorious name (*n*). To him we are directed to offer up our thankful acknowledgments for all the mercies we receive, and our petitions and supplications for all the good things we stand in need of: which tends to keep

(*m*) Exod. xx. 3, 4, 5. Matt. iv. 10. John iv. 24. Gal. iv. 8. 1 Thess. i. 9. Acts xiv. 15.

(*n*) See Psal. ciii. civ. cxlviii. Nehem. ix. 5, 6. 1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 15, 16. Rev. iv. 10, 11. v. 13. xv. 3, 4.

up in our minds a constant sense of our absolute dependence upon God, and our great obligations to his goodness (*o*). We must also confess our sins before him with penitent and contrite hearts, humbling ourselves on the account of them, and imploring his mercy; which is a part of religion justly becoming sinful creatures, and frequently recommended in the Holy Scriptures (*p*).

It is farther to be observed, that we are required in the Gospel to offer up our prayers, praises, and solemn acts of devotion to God in the name of Jesus Christ, the great Mediator whom he hath in his wisdom and goodness appointed for the great work of redeeming and saving mankind. This is the stated order of the Gospel-worship (*q*). And the regard we are obliged to have in all things to the Mediator, through whom we have access by one Spirit unto the Father, is a wise and gracious provision for God's dispensing his blessings to us in such a way as is most becoming his own infinite majesty, and the honour of his government and perfections. It tendeth both to impress our hearts with a just sense of God's infinite greatness and spotless purity, and of the evil of sin, which rendereth us unfit to approach immediately to so holy and glorious a majesty; and is at the same time excellently fitted to dispel our guilty jealousies and fears, and to inspire us with an ingenuous trust and affiance in him. For we cannot now reasonably doubt of God's kind intentions towards us, and of his gracious acceptance of our sincere though imperfect services, since he requires us to offer them to him in the name of his well-beloved Son, in whom he "is always

(*o*) Psal. cvii. cxxxvi. 1 Thess. v. 17, 18. Mat. vi. 6—13. vii. 7—11. Phil. iv. 6. Psal. lxxv. 2

(*n*) Psal. xxxii. 5. Prov. xxviii. 13. 1 John i. 9.

(*q*) John xvi. 23. Col. iii. 17. Eph. ii. 18.

well-pleased," who by his wise appointment offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, and who "is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us (*r*)."<sup>1</sup> The Gentiles had some notion of the propriety of applying to God through a Mediator, which perhaps might be owing to some remains of an antient tradition derived from the first ages. But this, like other branches of the primitive religion, became greatly perverted and obscured. As they had a multiplicity of idol gods, so also of idol mediators: and these being all of their own devising, without any divine warrant and appointment, spread a strange confusion through their worship. They had, as St. Paul expresseth it, "gods many, and lords many," whom they worshipped and adored: but to us Christians, "there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." And he elsewhere observes, that "there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, and that Jesus Christ is he (*s*)."<sup>2</sup> And our regard to this great Mediator, instead of taking off our regards from God our heavenly Father, tends rather to heighten our reverence of his Divine Majesty, our love to him, our confidence in him, and to fill us with the highest admiration of his wisdom and goodness. For it is he that in his sovereign grace and love hath appointed his only begotten Son to be the Saviour of mankind, through whom he communicateth to us the most valuable blessings (*t*).<sup>3</sup>

(*r*) Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 12.

(*s*) 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

(*t*) I have elsewhere more largely vindicated the Gospel doctrine of the Mediator, as highly tending to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. Answer to Christ. as old as the Creation, vol. II. cap. xv.



Not only doth Christianity give the most excellent precepts and directions with respect to the duties we more immediately owe to God, but also with regard to the duties incumbent upon us towards our fellow-creatures.

These may be ranked under two comprehensive heads, the doing justly and loving mercy; and the precepts delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures, and particularly in the Gospel of Jesus, are admirable with respect to both these. It may be sufficient to point to a few of them.

It is required of us that we be far from offering the least wrong or injury to others, in their persons, their properties, or reputations: that we render unto all their dues: that we lie not one to another, but speak every man truth to his neighbour, and provide things honest in the sight of all men. All fraud and falsehood in our words and dealings, and all injustice and violence, is most expressly forbidden (*u*). Not only must we abstain from injurious actions, but we are required not to be angry at our brother without a cause, to speak evil of no man, and neither to raise evil reports ourselves against our neighbour, nor spread them abroad when raised by others (*x*). We are forbidden to pass rash judgments upon others, lest we ourselves should be judged of God: on the contrary, we must put the best constructions upon their words and actions which the case will bear (*y*). And our Saviour inculcates it in the strongest manner, that no seeming acts of piety and devotion, or a diligence in the ritual observances of religion, will compensate for the wrongs or injuries done to our

(*u*) Micah vi. 8. Levit. xix. 11. 13. 15. 35, 36. Rom. xiii. 7. Eph. iv. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 21.

(*x*) Psal. xv. 3. Matt. v. 21, 22. Tit. iii. 2.

(*y*) Matt. vii. 1, 2. Rom. xiv. 10. 1 Cor. xiii. 5. 7. James iv. 11.

neighbours, nor will be accepted of God without making reparation, as far as is in our power, for those injuries and wrongs (z).

Not only doth the Gospel forbid the injuring our neighbour in any respect whatsoever, but it most expressly binds it upon us as our duty to do good to all men as far as we have ability and opportunity. We are required to assist them in their necessities and distresses, to sympathize with them in their afflictions and sorrows, as well as to rejoice in the good things which befall them, to be ready to distribute to them of our worldly substance for supplying their wants, to endeavour to convert them from the error of their way, and to reprove them when guilty of faults in the spirit of meekness, and finally, to do all we can to promote their welfare spiritual and temporal (a). Our Saviour the more effectually to shew the great importance of the duties of charity and mercy assures us, that particular notice shall be taken of them at the great day of judgment, and that men shall then be rewarded or condemned, according to their abounding in or neglecting the practice of those duties.

And whereas the most difficult part of the duty required of us towards mankind relates to the temper and conduct we are to observe towards our enemies and those that have injured us, our blessed Lord hath given us in this respect the most admirable precepts and directions. If we have suffered injuries from others, he enjoineth us to exercise a forgiving temper towards them, and not to give way to the bitterness of revenge. Some of our Lord's precepts to this

(z) Matt. v. 23, 24. xxiii. 23. Is. i. 11—18.

(a) Is. i. 17. lviii. 6—11. Gal. vi. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 18. Hebr. xiii. 3. 16. James v. 20. Gal. vi. 1. Levit. xix. 17. Rom. xii. 15.

purpose in his admirable sermon on the mount, are expressed in a proverbial way, and not to be urged in the utmost rigour; but the design of them is obvious and excellent, to suppress as far as possible the motions of a furious and vindictive spirit, which hath done so much mischief in the world, and to signify to us, that it is better patiently to bear injuries, than to be forward to retaliate them. He hath required us to insert it in our prayers, that God would forgive us our sins, as we forgive others the offences committed against us. The same is the design of some of his excellent parables. And in this as well as other instances the apostles taught the same doctrine with their divine Lord and Master, that we should recompense to no man evil for evil, and instead of being overcome of evil, should overcome evil with good (*b*).

This leads me to add, that our Lord not only forbiddeth the rendering evil for evil, but commandeth us to render good for evil. This is the design of that glorious precept, whereby we are commanded to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us. Instead of cursing we must pray to God for them, not indeed that they may go on and prosper in their evil courses, but that they may be brought to a right temper of mind, and so may become the objects of the divine favour: and if they be reduced to distress, we must be ready to assist and serve them in the kind offices of humanity. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink (*c*)."

And this certainly is carrying benevolence to the noblest height. And

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(*b*) Rom. xii. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. 1 Thess. v. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 9. Levit. xix. 18.

(*c*) Matt. v. 43, 44. Rom. xii. 20. Prov. xxv. 21.

though there have been high pretenders to reason who have found fault with it, yet some of the most eminent among the antient philosophers, as was observed before, have been sensible of the beauty and excellency of such a conduct, but they wanted the authority necessary to make it a law obligatory on mankind. But in the Gospel of Jesus it is more strongly enforced, urged with more powerful motives than ever it was before, and is bound upon us by a most express divine authority. To this it may be added, that our Lord hath expressly condemned that spirit, which carries men to persecute and do hurt to others, under pretence of zeal for the cause of God and religion (*d*).

Upon the whole, it is the manifest and uniform design and tendency of the Gospel of Jesus to recommend and enforce an universal benevolence. It lays the foundation of the duties we owe to mankind in love. It is there given as a comprehensive summary of the duties we owe to mankind: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (*e*).” And by our neighbour we are taught to understand not merely those of the same country, nation, and religion with ourselves, but all of the human race that stand in need of our kindness, and to whom we have an opportunity of doing good. This is beautifully exemplified by our Saviour, in the parable of the good Samaritan (*f*). To which may be added, that other remarkable precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them (*g*).” A rule which, if rightly considered, would be of great use in regulating our conduct towards our fellow-creatures.

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(*d*) Luke ix. 54, 55, 56.

(*e*) Matt. xxii. 39. Rom. xiii. 8, 9. Jam. ii. 8. Levit. xix. 18.

(*f*) Luke x. 33, 34, 35.

(*g*) Matt. vii. 12.



But though we are required to love and do good to all men, the design is not, as some who are desirous to impeach the Gospel morality would insinuate, that we should have the same degree of affection for all. The special love and esteem which good men should have for one another, the peculiar ties by which they are united, additional to the common ties of humanity, are recommended and enforced in the strongest and most engaging manner, and lay the properest foundation for all the intimacies of sacred friendship (*h*).

Besides the general precepts, prescribing the duties of justice and benevolence towards all mankind, there are also particular injunctions given us with respect to the duties incumbent upon us in the several stations and relations we bear in the civil and social life. And these are of great importance to the welfare of nations, families, and particular persons. The duties of princes, magistrates, and subjects, are excellently represented, every way sufficient, if duly attended to, to preserve the good order and welfare of society. It is required, that they that rule over men be just, ruling in the fear of God. Kings and all in authority are taught to consider themselves as under the dominion of the great and universal Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of hosts, to whom they must be accountable for their conduct, who hath appointed them for the good of the people, over whom he hath placed them, that they may administer justice and judgment without respect of persons, and be a terror not to good works, but to the evil (*i*). Subjects are

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(*h*) John xiii. 34, 35. Gal. vi. 10. Eph. iv. 1—6. Phil. ii. 1—5. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 John iii. 16.

(*i*) Deut. i. 16, 17. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7. Psal. lxxxii. 1—4. Prov. xx. 26—28. xxix. 11. 14. Eccles. v. 8. Rom. xiii. 3, 4. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15.

taught to be submissive and obedient to the higher powers, to pray for them, to fear God and honour the king, to give unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, to render tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour; and to do all this, not merely because the civil laws require it, and for fear of punishment from men, but for conscience sake, and in obedience to the laws of God (*k*). In like manner it is urged as a necessary part of religion, for servants to obey and serve their masters, with all proper respect, fidelity, and diligence, not purloining, not answering again, with good-will doing service as unto the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, that shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. These things, when really believed, and duly considered, will have a much stronger influence to engage them to a faithful and cheerful discharge of their duty, than mere custom, or the laws of the country. On the other hand, masters are required to give unto their servants that which is just and equal, forbearing threatenings, knowing that they also have a Master in heaven, and that with him there is no respect of persons (*l*). The duties of husbands and wives are also admirably described, and enforced by motives proper to the Christian dispensation, additional to those drawn from the law of nature and reason (*m*). The same thing may be said of the duties of parents and children (*n*). In like manner,

(*k*) Matt. xxii. 21. Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7. 1 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

(*l*) Eph. vi. 5—9. Col. iii. 22—25. iv. 1. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. Tit. ii. 9, 10, 11. Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15.

(*m*) Eph. v. 22—33. Col. iii. 18, 19. Tit. ii. 4, 5. 1 Pet. iii. 1—8.

(*n*) Exod. xx. 16. Eph. vi. 1—4. Col. iii. 20, 21. 1 Tim. v. 4—8.

superiors and inferiors, the elder and younger, the rich and the poor, are directed to a proper conduct towards one another: and rules are given which tend to regulate the deportment of equals among themselves, that they should be courteous, in honour preferring one another, not willingly giving offence to any, and endeavouring as far as possible to live peaceably with all men (*o*). In a word, all the various offices of humanity, justice, and charity, due from one man to another, are frequently described in the Sacred Writings, enforced by the most powerful motives, and by the authority of God himself, which, where it is firmly believed, must come with greater force upon the conscience than the mere institutions of human legislators, or the reasonings of philosophers and moralists.

These hints may give us an idea of the excellency of the Scripture precepts with respect to that part of morality which relates to the duties we owe to mankind.

As to that part of our duty which relates more immediately to ourselves, to the governing our affections, appetites, and passions, and to the due regulation and improvement of our temper, the Gospel law is peculiarly excellent. With regard to the angry passions, wrath, hatred, and revenge, it hath been already shewn, that great care is taken to restrain and moderate their exorbitances, and to engage men to exercise meekness, forbearance, and long-suffering; and above all, to cultivate that friendly temper and universal benevolence, which is one of the most excellent and amiable dispositions of the human mind (*p*). As to the concupiscible and voluptuous appetites and passions, these at the

(*o*) Rom. xii. 10. 12. 18. 1 Cor. x. 32. Phil. ii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 17. iii. 8. v. 5.

(*p*) Eph. iv. 26, 27, 31, 32. Col. iii. 12, 13, 14. 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.

time of our Saviour's coming into the world had broken over all bounds, and had introduced an universal corruption and dissoluteness of manners. One excellent design, therefore, of the Christian law, was to mortify and subdue the fleshly concupiscence, and to deliver men from their base servitude to the lusts of uncleanness, which, where they obtain the dominion, dishonour and defile our nature, and are of the most pernicious consequence to the interests of religion and virtue. The Gospel, wherever it is sincerely believed and embraced, inspires the utmost abhorrence of those unnatural lusts and impurities, which had made so monstrous a progress in the most civilized parts of the Heathen world, and which, as hath been shewn, were abetted and countenanced by the maxims and practices of their wise men and philosophers (*q*). All manner of uncleanness and lasciviousness is forbidden; not adultery only, but fornication also (*r*), which among the Pagans passed for no fault at all, or a very slight one. Polygamy and divorces upon slight occasions, which had been greatly abused among the Jews, gratifying their corrupt lusts, are not allowed in the religion of Jesus. And not only are the outward gross acts of uncleanness forbidden, but even the cherishing and

(*q*) 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. 1 Tim. i. 9, 10. And these abominations are also condemned in the strongest manner in the Old Testament.

(*r*) See what St. Paul saith to this purpose, 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4, 5. 7. which I have cited above, p. 141. And whosoever impartially considers what the same great apostle hath said concerning it, 1 Cor. vi. from ver. 13. to ver. 20. will find several considerations there urged, which are of the highest moment, and far superior to any thing that can be found in the most refined of the Pagan moralists. See also Prov. v. 5—11.



indulging impure and vicious inclinations, which are represented as criminal in the sight of God (*s*).

We are frequently warned against rioting and drunkenness, gluttony, and intemperance, which likewise tend greatly to debase and dishonour our nature. And what ought especially to be observed, Christ and his apostles urge their exhortations against the several kinds of fleshly lusts which have been mentioned, not merely from the many evil consequences they bring along with them in this present state, but, which is of far greater force, from the express authority and command of God, from the strict account we must give of the things done in the body at the day of judgment, and the terrors of the wrath to come (*t*). They are also represented as peculiarly inconsistent with the dignity and privileges to which we are called by the Gospel, and as altogether unworthy of those who have the honour of being the children of God, the members of Christ, the living temples of God and his Holy Spirit, and the heirs and expectants of the heavenly inheritance (*u*). But it is the great praise of Christianity, as delivered in the Gospel, that though chastity, purity, and temperance is there bound upon us by the most sacred obligations, yet care is taken to guard against superstitious extremes. Neither our Saviour nor his apostles, under pretence of extraordinary purity, forbid and condemn marriage, as some of the Essenes then did, and as others by a false refinement have since done. On the contrary, it is declared, that "marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled (*x*)."

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(*s*) Matt. v. 27, 28.

(*t*) Luke xxi. 34. Gal. v. 19. 21. Eph. v. 6. 1 Pet. 3, 4, 5. See also Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, 3. 20, 21. 29—35. Is. v. 11, 12.

(*u*) Rom. xiii. 12—14. 1 Cor. vi. 13. 19, 20. Eph. v. 18. 1 Thess. v. 5. 8.

(*x*) 1 Cor. vii. 9. Heb. xiii. 4.

temperance and excess is expressly forbidden, and we are required to keep the body under, yet we are allowed the moderate use of sensible enjoyments; and it is declared, that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer (*y*).

It is another instance of the excellency of the Gospel precepts, that particular care is taken to guard us against an immoderate passion for worldly riches. Our Saviour frequently takes occasion to shew the great folly of placing our confidence and happiness in such things as these, and represents in strong terms the inconsistency of a predominant love of worldly wealth with the love of God, and with real piety and virtue (*z*). The possession and enjoyment of riches is not absolutely forbidden; but we are directed to make a proper use of them, and to regard them as a trust committed to us by God, of which we are only the stewards, and for which we must be accountable; we are taught to employ them not as incentives to luxury, but as opportunities of doing good, of honouring God, and being useful to mankind: and we are assured for our encouragement, that riches so employed will recommend us to the divine favour, and open a way for us to everlasting happiness in the world to come (*a*).

Pride is frequently represented in Scripture as a very wrong temper of mind, and highly displeasing in the sight of God (*b*). Many passages in the Gospel are particularly designed to correct and subdue it in all its various branches

(*y*) 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 5.

(*z*) Mat. vi. 24. Mark x. 24. Luke xii. 15—21. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. See also Psal. xxxvii. 16. lxii. 10. Prov. xi. 28. xxiii. 4, 5. xxviii. 20.

(*a*) Luke xvi. 9, 10. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

(*b*) Prov. viii. 13. xvi. 5. James iv. 6.

and appearances, whether as it signifies an inordinate ambition which puts men upon contending who shall be greatest, or an eager thirst after the applause of men rather than the favour and approbation of God, or a presumptuous haughty arrogance, and a high conceit of ourselves and our own righteousness, and a contempt of others: never was an amiable humility recommended and enforced in such an engaging manner as by our Lord Jesus Christ, who also gave the most perfect and lovely pattern of it in his own example (*c*).

It is the design of several of our Saviour's precepts to instruct and direct us to possess our souls in patience, equanimity, and contentment. As nothing tends more to discompose and disturb the mind than anxious cares, or excessive sorrows and desponding fears, the Gospel provides the most effectual remedies against all these: not by representing worldly evils and calamities as no evils at all, or prescribing an unfeeling apathy, and suppressing the natural affections and passions, but by keeping them within proper bounds. No where are there such powerful considerations for supporting us under afflictions and adversities with a calm resignation and a lively hope. We are taught to regard them as sent by God for the wisest and best purposes, and are assured that he will graciously support us under them, and over-rule them to our greater benefit, and that if duly improved they shall issue in a complete everlasting felicity (*d*). Nothing can possibly be bet-

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(*c*) Matt. xxiii. 6—12. Mark ix. 33, 34, 35. Luke xviii. 9—14. John v. 44. Matt. xi. 29. John xiii. 12—17. Phil. ii. 3—7. 1 Pet. v. 5.

(*d*) Matt. v. 4. Rom. v. 4, 5. viii. 18. 28. 2 Cor. iv. 17. Heb. xii. 5—12. Psal. lv. 22. Psal. ciii. 9, 10, 13, 14. Lam. iii. 31, 32, 33.

ter fitted to deliver us from anxious distracting cares and solitudes, and a distrustful thoughtfulness for to-morrow, than the excellent precepts and directions given us by our Saviour and his apostles (*e*). But though we are directed to cast our cares upon God in a cheerful and steady dependence upon his wise and good Providence, yet we are cautioned not to neglect the use of proper means and endeavours on our parts. It is urged as our duty not to be slothful in business, to exercise ourselves with diligence in the work of our several callings and employments, that we may have lack of nothing, and we may have to give to him that needeth. Those who lead idle lives are represented as walking disorderly, and it is declared, that if any man will not work, neither should he eat (*f*). To this it may be added that our Saviour's precepts and instructions are admirably fitted to inspire us with a true divine fortitude, and to raise us above the slavish fear of men, who can only kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, or of any worldly evils and sufferings. And yet he is far from encouraging a forward enthusiastic rashness: he directeth his disciples not needlessly to expose themselves to dangers, but to take all proper precautions for avoiding the rage and malice of their persecutors (*g*): but when this could not be done, without betraying the cause of God, of truth and righteousness, they were to exert a noble fortitude, and to endure the greatest sufferings with constancy and even with

(*e*) Matt. vi. 25—34. Luke xii. 22—31. Phil. iv. 6. 11, 12. 1 Tim. vi. 6. 8. Heb. xiii. 5. 1 Pet. v. 7.

(*f*) Rom. xii. 11. Eph. iv. 28. 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12. 2 Thess. iii. 10, 11, 12.

(*g*) Matt. vii. 6. x. 16. 23.



joy, being assured of divine supports, and that great should be their reward in heaven (*h*).

As knowledge is one of the noblest improvements of the mind, and of mighty advantage to a life of piety and virtue, it is frequently urged upon us as our duty, to endeavour to get our minds furnished with divine and useful knowledge. And the knowledge there required is not merely of the speculative notional kind or science falsely so called, but such a knowledge of those things which are of the highest importance to our happiness, as may help us to make a progress in all holiness and goodness; we must endeavour to grow in wisdom and spiritual understanding, so as to discern the things which are excellent, and to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (*i*).

It is proper farther to observe, that, as the foundation of all the virtues which have been mentioned, and of the right ordering of ourselves, we are directed to endeavour get our hearts purified. Our Saviour represents the heart as the fountain, from whence good or evil thoughts, words, and actions flow. And therefore one principal part of the work required of us is to exercise a proper discipline over the heart, and to maintain a constant watch, not only over our outward conduct and deportment, but over our inward frame and temper. We must not take up with any thing short of a real universal purity and sanctity of soul, that truth in the inward parts, that simplicity and godly sincerity, free from all hypocrisy and guile, without which the most pompous external services are of no avail in the

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(*h*) Matt. v. 10, 11, 12. Luke xii. 4, 5. 1 Pet. iii. 14. iv. 12, 13.

(*i*) John xvii. 3. Phil. i. 9, 10. Rom. xii. 2. Eph. v. 17. Col. i. 9, 10. 1 Thess. v. 21. Tit. i. 1. Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5.

sight of God (*k*). Finally, it is required of us, that we make it our continual endeavour to grow in grace, and in every divine virtue. And in order to this we must live and walk by faith, “which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.” And as that future life and immortality is now brought into the most clear and open light, we are required to carry our desires and views beyond this transitory world, and all its enjoyments, and to seek the things which are above, and place our choicest affections there (*l*). Accordingly the Christian life is represented under the noble notion of a conversation with heaven, and communion with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ: it is a continual aspiring towards the perfection of our nature in a conformity to the divine goodness and purity, and an endeavour to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven (*m*).

To all which may be added, that it is the distinguishing character of the religion of Jesus, that at the same time that it directeth us to aspire to the highest degree of moral excellence, it teacheth us to maintain a constant sense of our own weaknesses and defects and of our insufficiency in ourselves. In the Gospel all boasting and confidence in our own righteousness and merits is excluded: and we are instructed to place our whole dependence upon the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, giving him the glory of every good thing that is in us, or which we are enabled to perform.

Upon this general view of the Gospel precepts, it ap-

(*k*) Prov. iv. 23. Matt. xxiii. 26. 2 Cor. i. 12. Eph. iv. 21—24. 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. John iii. 3. 6. 2 Cor. v. 17. Rom. ii. 28, 29. Gal. vi. 15.

(*l*) 2 Cor. v. 7. Col. iii. 1, 2. Heb. xiii. 14.

(*m*) Phil. iii. 20. 1 John i. 3. Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.

pears that they are of a most excellent nature and tendency: they exhibit a beautiful harmonious scheme of practical religion. The best systems of the most celebrated Pagan moralists, are in several respects deficient, and in some very wrong; but here there is nothing deficient, our whole duty is set before us in its just extent, without the least mixture of any thing that is wrong. But though it sets before us the noblest idea of moral excellence, it does not carry it to any unwarrantable extremes, or to a degree of strictness unsuitable to the human nature: which is an objection that some have made against it. We are indeed there taught to deny ourselves, but the intention is only that we should endeavour to keep the inferior appetites and passions in a due subjection to the nobler part of our natures, and that the pleasures and interests of the flesh and of the world should be made to give way to the duty we owe to God, and to the love of truth, virtue, and righteousness, whenever they happen to stand in competition; in which case our temporary self-denial shall be crowned with the most glorious rewards. We are required not to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof; but neither our Saviour nor his apostles have urged it upon us as a duty to macerate our bodies with those unnatural rigors and austerities, or to chastise them with that bloody discipline, which superstition hath often enjoined under pretence of extraordinary mortification and devotion. We are to be heavenly-minded, and to set our affections upon the things which are above, yet so as not to neglect the duties and offices incumbent on us in this present state. We are not commanded absolutely to quit the world; but, which is a much nobler attainment, to live above the world whilst we are in it, and to keep ourselves free from its pollutions; not wholly to renounce our present enjoyments, but to be moderate in the use of them, and so "to use this world as not to abuse it." Finally, the Gospel Morality takes in all

that is included in that comprehensive precept, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, *σέμνα*, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Phil. iv. 8.

But let a rule of moral duty be never so complete and excellent in itself, it will hardly be sufficient to answer the end in the present state of mankind, unless it be bound upon us by a proper authority, and enforced by the most powerful motives. And in this the religious and moral precepts of the Gospel have a vast advantage (*n*). They are not to be regarded as the mere counsels and dictates of wise men and moralists, who can only advise and endeavour to persuade, but cannot pretend to a proper authority over mankind; nor as the injunctions of fallible human legislators armed with civil authority, who cannot pretend to judge of the heart, or of men's inward dispositions, and who have nothing farther in view than the external order and welfare of society, and frequently make the rules of morality give way to their political interests; but they are urged upon us as the command of God himself, the sovereign Lord of the universe, who knoweth our most secret thoughts, and to whom we must give an account, not only of our outward actions, but of the inward affections and dispositions of our souls.

Another great advantage is, that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent into the world to publish these excellent laws of God to mankind, and hath given us the most illustrious

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(*n*) Lord Bolingbroke himself seems to acknowledge, that the Christian Revelation may be of use to enforce the practice of morality by a superior authority. See his works, Vol. V. p. 294. edit. 4to.



proofs of his divine mission, hath himself exemplified those laws and precepts to us in his own sacred life and practice. Examples have usually a greater force than bare precepts. And what example so proper and engaging as that of the Son of God in human flesh, the most perfect image of the invisible Deity, in whom the divine perfections are brought nearer to our view, and within the reach of our imitation? In him we may behold a most complete pattern of universal holiness and spotless purity, of the most ardent love to God, the most wonderful love to mankind, the most perfect obedience and resignation to the divine will, the most exemplary patience under the greatest sufferings, the most admirable humility, meekness, and condescension, and of every amiable virtue. And should not we be desirous to tread in his illustrious footsteps? and to live and act as so glorious and divine a person, to whom we are under such infinite obligations, lived and acted before us?

It tends farther to recommend and enforce the precepts of the Gospel, that all the charms of the divine grace and goodness are here opened to our view. Motives to obedience drawn from love are fitted to work upon the best principles of our nature. And never was there such a display of the wonderful love of God to mankind as in the methods of our redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ. Where this mystery of godliness is heartily received with a true and living faith, it will have a happy influence to engage and draw us to a holy and dutiful obedience: since it is every where inculcated in the Gospel that the design of God's sending his own Son into the world, and of all the great things which have been done for us, is to oblige us to die more and more unto sin, and to live unto righteousness.

The excellent privileges of the Gospel do also, as was before hinted, furnish very powerful motives to a holy and virtuous practice. For this purpose we are called to

be saints, honoured to be the members of Christ's church and kingdom, the children of God, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance, that we may be a people zealous of good works, shewing forth the praises and virtues of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

To all which may be added the important motives drawn from the rewards and punishments of a future state, of which the Gospel exhibits far clearer discoveries, and gives fuller assurances, than were ever given to the world before, as will be shewn in the following part of this work.

Finally, for our greater encouragement, divine assistances are provided for us. This is a consideration of great moment, as every one must acknowledge that has a due sense of the weakness and corruption of the human nature in its present state, and the manifold temptations to which we are here exposed. We are not left merely to our own unassisted strength, but have the most express promises and assurances given us in the Gospel, that God will send his Holy Spirit to enlighten and sanctify us, to strengthen and assist us in the performance of our duty, if from a sense of our own insufficiency in ourselves we humbly apply to him for his gracious assistances, and at the same time are diligent in the use of all proper means and endeavours on our parts. For it must be considered, that those divine influences and aids are communicated in such a way as is agreeable to the just order of our rational faculties, and not so as to render our own endeavours needless, but to assist and animate our endeavours.

Upon the whole, considering the great darkness and corruption into which mankind had fallen, nothing was more wanted, than to have a pure system of morals, containing the whole of our duty in its just extent, delivered in plain and express precepts, as the laws of God himself, enforced

by all the sanctions of a divine authority, and by all the charms of the divine love and goodness; and this is fully done by the Gospel of Jesus.

It is a natural inference from what hath been offered on this subject, that the admirable purity of the Gospel morals, and the uniform tendency of the Christian doctrines, precepts, privileges, and ordinances, to promote real holiness of heart and life, furnisheth a very convincing proof of the divinity of the Christian revelation. This is an argument that strikes the mind with great force, and which ought mightily to recommend it to the esteem and veneration of mankind, especially of all the impartial lovers of truth and virtue. The first publishers of it were men of great simplicity, plainness and integrity, destitute of all worldly advantages, and the remotest that can be supposed from the character of artful impostors. Animated by a pure and fervent and well regulated zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men, they exposed themselves to the greatest sufferings, reproaches, and persecutions, to establish a scheme of religion, the design of which was to promote the practice of universal righteousness: a godlike purity shines through the whole of it: there is nothing in it to sooth and flatter the lusts and vices of men, nothing that breathes the spirit of this world, of ambition, avarice, and sensuality. And as little can the Gospel be supposed to be the work of weak hot-brained enthusiasts, as of artful self-designing impostors. When we consider that the first publishers of Christianity were for the most part men of no learning and education, and yet taught men to form the most just and sublime notions of religion, contrary in several instances to the prejudices which they themselves had deeply imbibed, and far exceeding what the world had known before, and that they also advanced the most perfect scheme of morals, vastly superior to what had been taught by the most admired philosophers of the Pagan world, men of the greatest



parts and genius, and even by the most celebrated Jewish doctors, who had by their corrupt glosses depraved the true sense of the law and prophets, this is a strong confirmation of the truth of their pretensions; that the doctrines they taught, and the precepts they delivered in the name of God, were not of their own invention, a thing of which they were evidently incapable, but were, as they themselves professed, of a divine original. This was farther confirmed by the many glorious attestations given from heaven to the divine mission of our Saviour, and of those that were sent to publish the Gospel in his name. Never were there any facts better attested, or which exhibited more illustrious proofs of an extraordinary divine interposition. They manifestly transcended all human power; and therefore must have been wrought either immediately by the power of God himself, or of good beings superior to mankind, acting under his direction, and who would never have given their attestation to an imposture. And as to evil beings, whatever we suppose their power to be, it cannot be imagined that they would lend their assistance to give credit to a scheme of religion and morals, the plain tendency of which was to turn men from idolatry, vice, and wickedness, to the knowledge, obedience, and adoration of the only true God, and to the practice of piety and virtue. So convincing was the evidence of these proofs, that the religion of Jesus soon made an amazing progress, notwithstanding the obstacles and opposition it met with, which humanly speaking, it seemed impossible to overcome. And wherever it was really believed and embraced, it wrought a wonderful and happy change. Never was there a body of men in the world, so holy and virtuous, of such exemplary piety, charity, purity, and temperance, as the primitive Christians. And accordingly one of the topics, which the antient apologists for Christianity constantly insisted upon, and for the truth of which they appealed to the Heathens themselves, was the



remarkable reformation it wrought in the lives and manners of those that embraced it. They shone as lights in the world in the midst of a vicious and corrupt generation. And so they continued whilst they kept close to the religion and morality laid down in the Holy Scriptures. And in proportion as they deviated from that perfect rule, they either became loose in their practices, and fell from their primitive virtue, or under pretence of an extraordinary purity above what the Gospel required, ran into the extremes of superstition. So wise, so admirable, so justly tempered is the Gospel scheme of morality, as delivered by Christ and his apostles, that all the attempts of after-ages to raise it to a higher degree of excellency, really fell short of its original perfection.

It must be acknowledged, indeed, and has been often objected by the enemies of the Gospel Revelation, that there is a great corruption of manners among Christians. But this does not prove either that Christianity was not a signal advantage to the world when it was first published, or that it is not now of great use and benefit, and what we ought to be highly thankful for. The best institutions in the world may be abused; and the guilt of those who go on in a course of vice and wickedness, in opposition to the clear light and laws of the Gospel, admits of peculiar aggravations. If there are many professed Christians, who live immoral and dissolute lives, they are generally such as either content themselves with the bare name of Christians, without taking any pains to get a just acquaintance with the religion they profess, or who do not allow themselves seriously to consider and lay to heart its doctrines and precepts, or who do not really believe it, or at least yield but a doubtful and wavering assent to it. And this is often very much owing to the purity of the Gospel morals, which creates prejudices against it in the minds of those who are under the power of evil habits and vicious affections. The

infidelity and scepticism of many in the present age, and the growing indifferency to all religion, which is too visible among us, is, I doubt not, one great cause of that abounding dissoluteness and corruption, which is so much complained of. But still it is certainly true, that if the restraints which the Christian religion lays upon vice and wickedness were removed, the corruption would be much greater and more general than it is. Many thousands, who would otherwise be vicious and dissolute, are influenced by the doctrines and precepts of Christianity to lead sober, righteous, and godly lives. And notwithstanding the degeneracy of Christians, there is just reason to conclude, that there are incomparably more and greater instances of a sublime and rational piety, and an exemplary purity of manners among those that profess to believe and receive the Gospel, than are to be found among those of any other profession or character. The most effectual way, therefore, of recovering men to the practice of real piety and virtue, is to endeavour to engage them to a close adherence to the heavenly doctrines, and the pure and excellent laws of the Gospel, which undeniably gives the best and greatest helps and encouragements to a holy and virtuous life. And it is an advantage which calls for our highest thankfulness, that whatever corruptions in doctrine and practice professed Christians have fallen into, or may fall into, we have still a perfect rule or standard laid down in the Holy Scriptures, to which we may have recourse, and by a close attention to which, we may have sure directions given us as to every part of religion, and the practice of universal piety and righteousness.

I shall conclude this part of the subject with the suffrage of two learned and ingenious gentlemen, who are generally thought not to have been much inclined to superstition and bigotry. The one is the author of the *Lettres Juives*, who, in the person of a Jew, acknowledges, that “the first Na-

zarenes preached a doctrine so conformable to equity, and so useful to society, that their greatest adversaries now agree, that their moral precepts are infinitely superior to the wisest philosophers of antiquity (o)." The other is the justly admired Mons. de Montesquieu. We are informed by good authority, that he declared with his dying breath, to those that stood around him, and particularly to the Duchess D'Aiguillon, that "the morality of the Gospel is a most excellent thing, and the most valuable present which could possibly have been received by man from his Creator (p)."

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(o) "Les premiers docteurs Nazarenes ont prêché une doctrine si conforme a l'équité, et si utile a la société, que leurs plus grands adversaires conviennent aujourd'hui, que leurs precepts moraux sont infiniment au dessus des plus sages philosophes de l'antiquité." *Lettres Juives*, lettre 142.

(p) See *L'Eloge de Monsieur de Montesquieu*, par Mons. de Maupertuis, *Hamburgh* 1755.

THE END OF PART II.

THE  
ADVANTAGE AND NECESSITY  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN REVELATION,  
SHEWN FROM THE  
STATE OF RELIGION  
IN THE  
*ANTIEN'T HEATHEN WORLD.*

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PART III.

WITH RESPECT TO THE BELIEF OF A FUTURE STATE OF  
REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The importance of the doctrine of a future state. It is agreeable to right reason. The natural and moral arguments for a future state of great weight. Yet not so evident, but that if men were left merely to their own unassisted reason, they would be apt to labour under great doubts and difficulties. A Revelation from God concerning it would be of great advantage.

IT is a point of vast consequence to religion, and to the cause of virtue in the world, whether there be a life to come, in which men shall be rewarded or punished, according to their behaviour in this present state; or whether this present life be the whole of our existence, beyond which there is nothing to be hoped for or feared, in a way of retribution for our present moral conduct.



If there were no future state of retribution, or men generally believed there were none, they would look no farther than the pains and pleasures of this present life: it could not ordinarily be expected that they should have any thing in view, but the gratifying their appetites and inclinations, and promoting what they apprehend to be their present worldly interest, to which every other consideration must be subordinate: flesh and sense would be their governing principles: good men would be deprived of those hopes which are a source of joy and comfort to them in their greatest afflictions and distresses, and which tend to animate them to a patient continuance in well-doing: and bad men would be freed from those terrors, than which nothing can be better fitted to put a stop to the exorbitancies of their evil courses, and to avert them even from secret acts of wickedness. Accordingly, it has been always accounted a principal advantage of the Christian Revelation, that it gives us the strongest assurances of a future state, and of the rewards and punishments of the life to come. The ablest patrons of Natural Religion, as opposed to Revelation, have been sensible of this, and therefore have pretended that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and a state of future retributions, is so obvious to the common reason of all mankind, that there needs no extraordinary revelation, either to discover it to us, or strengthen our belief of it. And yet there is too much reason to think, that they have asserted this rather with a view to depreciate the use and need of Divine Revelation, than that they really believed that doctrine; since at other times they have thrown out suspicions against it, and represented it as a matter of uncertainty; and some of them have used their utmost efforts to invalidate the proofs which are brought for it.

I readily acknowledge, that the natural and moral arguments for the immortality of the soul, and a future state of retributions, are, when duly considered, of great weight.

And none have set these proofs in a stronger light than the Christian philosophers and divines. Whosoever impartially considers their manner of treating this subject, will find it vastly superior to that which was made use of by the most eminent Pagan philosophers who lived before the coming of our Saviour. In this, as well as other instances, Revelation has been of great advantage for assisting and improving our reason in matters of the highest importance. It has been shewn, with great strength and clearness of argument, that matter, as far as we can judge of it from its known essential properties, is in its own nature incapable of thought, however diversified or modified; that a substance compounded of innumerable parts, as all own matter to be, cannot be the subject of an individual consciousness, the seat of which must be a simple and undivided substance (a): that intellect and will are of a quite different nature from corporeal figure and motion; and the sublime faculties and operations of the human soul, its power of rising above material and temporal objects, and contemplating things spiritual and invisible, celestial and eternal, appear to be the properties of a substance of a far nobler and higher kind than this corruptible flesh: and that therefore there is no reason to think it will die with the body; but that being of a quite different nature, essentially active, simple, and indivisible, it is designed by the Creator, who made it so, for an immortal existence. To this may be added the strong apprehensions of a future state, so natural to the human mind, and which are not to be found in any of the inferior animals: and that men alone of all the crea-

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(a) This is very well argued by the learned Dr. Samuel Clarke, in his Letter to Mr. Dodwell, and his several defences of it against an acute and ingenious adversary. Nor have I ever seen a sufficient answer to that book.

tures in this lower world are capable of being governed by the hopes and fears of the world to come. This yields a reasonable presumption, that the Author of their frame designed they should be so governed: and it is scarce consistent with the best ideas we can form of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, to suppose that he designed and formed them to be governed by a lie. It strengthens this, when we consider, that it seems absurd to imagine that so noble a creature as man, endued with such admirable faculties, by which he is capable of making immortal proficiencies in knowledge and virtue, should be designed for no other life than this short and transitory existence, in which he is incapable of arriving at the true perfection and felicity of his nature. These reasonings receive a mighty additional force from the moral arguments for a state of future retributions, drawn from the present seemingly unequal dispensations of Divine Providence; the many evils and sufferings to which the best and worthiest of men are often exposed in this present state; and the prosperous condition of bad and wicked men, many of whom have continued in flourishing and splendid circumstances to the end of their lives. From these and several other considerations which might be mentioned, it seems reasonable to conclude, that this is not the only life man is designed for, and that there is a state before us, in which good men shall be amply rewarded, and the wicked punished: and even those secret good or evil actions and dispositions which did not come under the cognizance of earthly tribunals, shall be brought into judgment, and meet with a suitable recompense from the supreme and most righteous Lord and Governor of the world. These things carry a great deal of probability to serious and contemplative minds, and shew that what is revealed to us in the Gospel on this subject is suited to the best notions we can form of the nature of man, and the wisdom and righteousness of the divine administrations.

But yet it must be acknowledged, that there are objections and difficulties brought on the other side, which, if men were left merely to themselves, and to their own unassisted reason, might be apt to raise doubts in their minds, and very much weaken their belief of this great truth. The metaphysical arguments drawn from the different nature of body and spirit, however just in themselves, are only fitted to make impressions on a few persons of philosophical minds, and who have been accustomed to abstracted speculations, but carry no great light of evidence and conviction to the generality of mankind; who, having from their birth been wholly conversant with sensible and material objects, cannot easily form a notion of a spiritual being distinct from matter. After the enquiries and disquisitions of men of the greatest genius and ability in all ages, we yet know very little of the nature and essence of our own souls, of the origin of our ideas, and the proper difference between body and spirit, and what influence the one of them may have upon the other. Experience convinces us of the intimate connection and close union there is between our bodies and souls in this present state: and that the exercise of our faculties, and the operations of our souls, very much depend upon the due disposition of the bodily organs. To which it may be added, that the soul often seems to decay with the body, and to outward appearance is extinguished with it. Even those who most firmly believe the soul's immortality, find it very difficult to form a distinct conception how it exists and operates when separated from the body. The world to come is hidden from our view: it is not the object of any of our senses: it is a state which we are wholly unacquainted with, and of which, if left merely to ourselves, we are scarce capable of forming a clear and satisfactory idea; and therefore is the proper object of a Divine Revelation, and of the exercise of that faith "which is the evidence of things not seen." And as the soul of man does not



exist independently by an absolute necessity of nature, but depends for the continuation of its existence upon the will of God, we can be no farther sure of its immortal duration, than we are sure that it is the will of God that it should be so: and though this may be probably gathered from several considerations, yet nothing could give us so full an assurance of it, as a Revelation from God, containing an express discovery of his will concerning it. The moral arguments for a future state are indeed of great force; yet it must be owned, that there are such secrets and depths of Providence, which we are not able to account for; we have such narrow views of things, and know so little of the divine counsels, and of the reasons and ends of the divine administrations, and what measures it may please Infinite Wisdom to take in the government of the world, that there may still be room for doubts and uncertainties in a serious and thoughtful mind, which nothing less than the light of Divine Revelation can effectually dispel.

But the surest way of judging of what may be expected from human unassisted reason, with respect to the immortality of the soul and a future state, is to consider what men of the greatest abilities in the Pagan world, and who seem to have been capable of carrying reason to its highest improvement, have said and thought upon it. This was for many ages the subject of their philosophical enquiries, and which was debated among them with all the strength of argument they were masters of. And how far they succeeded in their enquiries, will appear from the following treatise.

## CHAPTER II.

Some notions of the immortality of the soul and a future state obtained among mankind from the most antient times, and spread very generally through the nations. This was not originally the effect of human reason and philosophy, nor was it merely the invention of legislators for political purposes: but was derived to them by a most antient tradition from the earliest ages, and was probably a part of the primitive religion communicated by Divine Revelation to the first of the human race.

**BEFORE** we enter upon an examination of the sentiments of philosophers on this subject, it is proper to observe, that the belief of the immortality of the soul and a future state obtained among mankind in the earliest ages; of which we have all the proof that a matter of this nature is capable of. This is acknowledged by some who are otherwise no great friends to that doctrine. Lord Bolingbroke owns, that "the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, began to be taught before we have any light into antiquity. And when we begin to have any, we find it established, that it was strongly inculcated from times immemorial, and as early as the most antient and learned nations appear to us (b)." And we find it equally obtained among the most barbarous as among the most civilized nations. The antient Scythians, Indians, Gauls, Germans, Britons, as well as the Greeks and Romans, believed that souls are immortal, and that men shall live in another state after death, though it must be confessed their ideas of it were very obscure (c). There were scarce any of the American nations,

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(b) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 237. edit. 4to.

(c) Grotius de Verit. Relig. Christ. lib. i. sect. 22.

when the Europeans first came among them, but had some notion of it.

It is observed by a celebrated writer, that the most antient Greek poets, who represent the manners and customs of their own and other nations, still speak of this as their popular opinion and belief (*d*). Timæus the Pythagorean commends the Ionean poet [Homer] for the account he gives from antient tradition of future punishments (*e*): and if this was an antient tradition in Homer's time, it must have been of very great antiquity. Socrates, as represented by Plato, endeavoured to prove the immortality of the soul in a way of reason and argument, but he never pretended to be the first inventor of this doctrine, or to have himself found it out merely by his own enquiries, but frequently speaks of it as a most antient and venerable tradition. Thus in the *Phædo* Socrates saith, "I am in good hope, that there is something remaining for those that are dead; and that, as hath been said of old, [ὅττις γὰρ καὶ πάλαι γίγεται] it is much better for good than for bad men (*f*)."  
Plato in this agreed with his great master. In his seventh epistle written to Dion's friends and relations, he says, "That we ought always to believe the antient and sacred words," [which plainly points to some traditions of great antiquity, and supposed to be of divine original] "which shew both that the soul is immortal, and that it hath judges, and suffers the greatest punishments, when it is disengaged from the body (*g*)."  
From whence he con-

(*d*) Divine Legation of Moses, Vol. I. book ii. sect. 1. p. 90. 4th edit.

(*e*) See his treatise of the Soul of the World, at the latter end.

(*f*) Platon. Opera, p. 378. A. edit. Lugd.

(*g*) Ibid. p. 716. A. Πείθεσθαι δὲ ἕως αἰεὶ χρεὶ τοῖς ταλαίοις καὶ ἱεροῖς λόγοις, οἱ δὲ μνηύουσιν ἡμῖν καὶ ἀθανάτων ψυχὴν εἶναι. δικαστὰς τε ἴσχειν, καὶ τίней τὰς μεγίστας τιμωρίας, ὅταν τις ἀπαλλάχθῃ τῷ σώματος.

cludes, that it is a less evil to suffer the greatest acts of injustice than to do them. Aristotle, as cited by Plutarch, speaking of the happiness of men after their departure out of this life, represents it as a most antient opinion, so old that no man knows when it began, or who was the author of it, that it hath been handed down to us by tradition from infinite ages (*h*). Cicero speaking of the immortality of the soul, supposes it to have been held "by those of the best authority, which in every case is and ought to be of great weight: and that all the antients agreed in it, who were the more worthy of credit, and the more likely to know the truth, the nearer they approached to the first rise of mankind, and to their divine original (*i*).” He also observes, that “the antients believed it, before they became acquainted with natural philosophy, which was not cultivated till many years afterwards: and that they were persuaded of things by a kind of natural admonition, without enquiring into the reasons and causes of them (*k*).” He afterwards argues from the consent of all nations concerning it. “*Permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium* (*l*).” And Seneca in his 117th epistle represents this universal consent as of no small moment in this argument.

(*h*) Plutarch. in *Consol. ad Apollon.* Oper. tom. II. p. 115. C. edit. Xyl.

(*i*) “*Autoribus quidem ad istam sententiam uti optumis possumus quod in omnibus causis, et debet et solet valere plurimum: et primum quidem omni antiquitate, quæ quò propiùs aberat ab ortu et divina progenie, hoc melius ea fortasse quæ erant vera cernebat.*” *Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 12.*

(*k*) “*Qui nondùm ea quæ multis post annis tractari cepissent physica didicissent, tantum sibi persuaserant, quantum natura admonente cognoverant, rationes et causas rerum non tenebant.*” *Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 13.*

(*l*) *Ibid. cap. 16.*



Plutarch in his consolation to Apollonius, not only approves the passage of Aristotle produced above concerning the great antiquity of this tradition, but represents it as an opinion delivered by the most antient poets and philosophers [*ὁ τῶν παλαιῶν τε ποιητῶν καὶ φιλοσόφων λόγος*] that some kind of honour and dignity shall be conferred upon excellent persons, after their departure out of this life; and that there is a certain region appointed, in which the souls of such persons reside (*m*). The same eminent philosopher in his consolatory letter to his wife on the death of their little child, supposes that the souls of infants pass after death into a better and more divine state. And that this is what may be gathered from their antient laws and customs derived by tradition from their ancestors (*n*).

I think it sufficiently appears from the several testimonies which have been produced, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and a future state obtained very generally among mankind in the earliest ages. It is true that some have pretended to assign the first authors of this opinion. Cicero himself says, that, as far as appears from written accounts, Pherecydes Syrius was the first who taught that the souls of men are sempiternal or immortal. For Cicero uses these words as synonymous. Thus he speaks of the body's being buried after death in a sempiternal sleep, i. e. not a sleep that never had a beginning, but which shall never have an end (*o*). "*Credo equidem*

(*m*) Plutarch. ubi supra. p. 120. B.

(*n*) Plutarch. Oper. tom. II. p. 612.

(*o*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 16. The author of *Le Discours sur la Vie heureuse*, published at the end of the *Pensées Philosophiques*, after having asserted that from the most remote antiquity, the entire destruction of our being at death was a doctrine believed among the philosophers, tells us, that Cicero names the

etiam alios tot sæculis; sed quod literis extet, Pherecydes Syrius primum dixit animos esse hominum sempiter-

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man who first took upon him to believe that the soul is immortal. But it is manifest that it was not Cicero's intention to insinuate that Pherecydes was the first man that ever believed the immortality of the soul. The same confident writer adds, that "in the present enlightened age, it is demonstrated by a thousand proofs, that there is only one life and one happiness," i. e. a happiness confined in this present life. Dans un siècle aussi éclairé que le notre, il est enfin démontré par mille preuves sans réplique, qu'il n'y a qu'une vie, et qu'une félicité." An excellent instance this of the extraordinary sagacity of the present age: i. e. of those who set up for masters of reason in opposition to revelation. And indeed this author plainly and without disguise pushes this system of the mortality of the soul, and the utter extinction of our existence at death, to its natural consequences, utterly subversive of all religion and morality. See here above p. 37. of this volume.

To what is there observed I now add, that Virtue and Vice, according to this writer, are only different modifications of matter, like a clock's going right or wrong: and a man has no reason to blame himself for doing what he could not possibly help. This is a consequence he plainly avows. "When I do good or evil," says he, "if I be vicious in the morning, and virtuous in the evening, it is my blood that is the cause of it; and yet I believe I did it by choice, and applaud myself upon my liberty." He asserts, that an absolutely necessary determination draws us, une détermination absolument nécessaire nous entraîne; and yet we imagine we are free. Upon which he exclaims, "What fools are we! and fools by so much the more miserable, that we incessantly reproach ourselves for not having done that which it was not in our power to do!" Que nous sommes fous! et fous d'autant plus malheureux, que nous nous reprochons sans cesse de ne pas avoir fait ce qu'il n'étoit pas au notre pouvoir de faire. Here he evidently discards, as far as in him lies, all remorse of conscience for evil deeds, as a foolish and unreasonable thing. A doctrine this, which besides the impiety of it, is of the worst consequence to the good order of civil communities.

nos (*p*).” But it is evident that he does not here intend to affirm, that Pherecydes was absolutely the first that ever held the immortality of the soul. For he himself represents it as having been believed from all antiquity, by those who were nearest the origin of the human race. And in this very paragraph he declares it as his own opinion, that there were others in the succession of so many ages who had taught it, though their names are not recorded. His meaning therefore is probably this, that though others had believed and maintained it long before, and it stood on the foot of antient tradition, Pherecydes was the first of the philosophers, of whom there was any account then extant, who taught it to his scholars as part of his philosophical doctrine. Diogenes Laertius tells us, that some affirmed that Thales was the first who said that souls are immortal (*q*). Pausanias gives the honour of it to the Chaldeans and Persian Magi, from whom he thinks the Greeks had it (*r*). And Laertius also mentions it as the doctrine of the Magi, that men shall live again and be immortal (*s*). According to Athenæus, Homer was the first who said that the soul is immortal (*t*). Others name Pythagoras for the author of it. Herodotus ascribes it to the Egyptians (*u*). And in this he has been followed by others. Lord Bolingbroke, after having declared in the passage above referred to, that it began to be taught before we have any light into antiquity, yet pretends to assign the origin of it, and that it was invented in Egypt, and came from thence to the

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(*p*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 16.

(*q*) Laert. lib. i. segm. 24.

(*r*) In Messeniæ, cap. 32.

(*s*) Laert. in Proœm. segm. 9.

(*t*) Deipnos. lib. xi. p. 507.

(*u*) Lib. ii. cap. 122.

Greeks, and from whom it was derived to the Romans (*x*). All that can justly be concluded from those different accounts is, that the author of this doctrine was not known: that the several persons which have been mentioned taught the immortality of the soul, but that this doctrine was really of more antient date than any of them, and even from times immemorial. There is, therefore, just ground to conclude that it was not originally the result of philosophical disquisitions, to which men did not much apply themselves in those early ages. Nor was it merely the invention of lawgivers for political purposes, as some have represented it. The noble author above-mentioned expressly asserts, "the antient theists, polytheists, philosophers, and legislators, invented the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, to give an additional strength to the sanctions of the law of nature (*y*)."<sup>1</sup> That it gives a mighty sanction to that law will be readily allowed; and its great utility this way, as the learned bishop of Gloucester has very properly observed, is no small argument of its truth. It has been already hinted, that men's being capable of being governed by the hopes and fears of the life to come, which cannot be said of any of the inferior animals, seems plainly to shew that the author of the human frame designed man not merely for the present, but for a future state of existence. For who would undertake to propose such sanctions to the brutes? The wisest of the antient legislators encouraged the belief of a future state, as they did that of the existence of a God and a Providence. But they were not the authors or inventors of these doctrines. They took advantage of the notions of these things, which had already obtained among the people, and endeavoured to make their own use of

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(*x*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 288.

(*y*) Ibid.



them. The most reasonable account which can be given of the early and universal spreading of the doctrine of a future state among the nations, is, that it was part of the primitive religion communicated to the first parents and ancestors of the human race, and which came originally by divine revelation, and was from them transmitted to their posterity. Grotius speaking of the notion that the souls of men survive their bodies, says, that "this most antient tradition spread from our first parents (for from whom else could it come?) to almost all civized nations." "*Quæ antiquissima traditio a primis (unde enim alioqui?) parentibus, ad populos moratiores pene omnes manavit (z).*" And indeed it cannot well be conceived, that the first men in the rude illiterate ages, when they were little used to abstracted reasonings, should be able to form notions (if left merely to themselves) of spiritual immaterial beings, or that they had souls within them which should survive their bodies, and continue to think and act without the assistance of the bodily organs: how should they pursue the refined speculations concerning the nature and qualities of the soul, which so puzzled and embarrassed the acutest philosophers, and the greatest masters of reason, in the ages of learning and science? The first men could not so much as know, till they were taught by observation and experience, or had information of it by foreign instruction, that they were to die and have an end put to their lives by the dissolution of the bodily frame, much less that there was to be another life after this, in which they were to be rewarded or punished according to their present conduct. Since therefore it cannot be denied that some notion of a future state obtained very early in the world, and spread very generally among

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(z) Grot. de Verit. Relig. Christ. lib. i. cap. 22.

mankind, and since there is little likelihood that men in those first ages came to the knowledge of it in the way of reasoning and abstracted speculation, it is most reasonable to resolve it into a primitive universal tradition, derived from the first ages. And to this several of the passages which have been produced from the most eminent Pagan writers plainly refer, and some of them represent that tradition as having been of a divine original. And of this there are plain intimations given us in the Holy Scriptures. It is indeed urged by a learned and ingenious writer, who is not willing to allow that the nations received any part of their religion by tradition from the first parents of mankind, that "it does not appear that either Adam or Noah received from God any thing concerning the immortality of the soul, or a state of future rewards and punishments; and that no passage can be produced, which contains such revelation (*a*)."

But it appears from the express testimony of the sacred writer to the Hebrews, that Abraham and other patriarchs, who lived but a few ages after the flood, looked forward beyond this present transitory state to a better heavenly country. He represents both them, and some of those who lived before the flood, as having lived and walked by faith, which he describes to be the "substance, or confident expectation (as the word there used in the original might properly be rendered) of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." And this faith must be supposed to have been originally founded on a divine revelation or promise. And since it appears from the Mosaic writings, that God communicated by revelation the knowledge of several things relating to religion and their duty to the first parents of mankind, it may be rea-

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(*a*) Dr. Sykes's *Connection and principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 438, 439, 440.

sonably concluded, that some notion was also given them of the immortality of the soul and a future state; especially after the sentence of death pronounced upon them after the fall. Some notices of this kind seem to have been particularly necessary on occasion of the death of Abel, who probably was the first man that died, and who seemed to perish in his righteousness; and afterwards, by the translation of Enoch, God gave a manifest proof of a future state, prepared for those who had obeyed and served him in a holy and virtuous life here on earth. And as this must be known to Noah, he could not be ignorant of the life to come, and would undoubtedly be careful to instruct his posterity in a point of such vast importance. This, which is plainly intimated concerning the antediluvian patriarchs, is, as hath been already hinted, still clearer with respect to Abraham, and other patriarchs after the flood; as any one may see that will consider what is said concerning them in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, verse 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16. To which may be added, that St. Paul seems to refer to some very antient promise or revelation concerning this matter, when he speaks of God's having "promised eternal life, *πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων*, before antient times," or as Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Oecumenius render it, *ἀπὸθεν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*, "of old time from the beginning of ages." Titus i. 2. (b)

Thus we have the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, and of the most eminent Heathen writers, concerning the great antiquity of the doctrine of a future state. But in process of time, in this as well as other instances, the antient primitive traditions became greatly corrupted: and at the time of our Saviour's coming the belief of it was very much ob-

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(b) See Dr. Whitby's Commentary on Tit. i. 2. See also Dr. Benson's Paraphrase and notes on that place.

scured and almost lost, even in the most learned and civilized parts of the Heathen world. There was therefore great need of a divine revelation, which should exhibit far clearer discoveries, and give fuller assurances of it than had been ever given to the world before. This was done to the greatest advantage by the Christian revelation: so that it may be justly said, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."



## CHAPTER III.

The antient traditions concerning the immortality of the soul and a future state became in process of time greatly obscured and corrupted. It was absolutely denied by many of the philosophers, and rejected as a vulgar error. Others represented it as altogether uncertain, and having no solid foundation to support it. The various and contradictory sentiments of the philosophers concerning the nature of the human soul. Many of the Peripatetics denied the subsistence of the soul after death, and this seems to have been Aristotle's own opinion. The Stoics had no settled or consistent scheme on this head: nor was the doctrine of the immortality of the soul a doctrine of their school. A future state not acknowledged by the celebrated Chinese philosopher Confucius, nor by the sect of the learned who profess to be his disciples.

IT has been shewn, that the belief of the immortality of the soul, and a future state, obtained very early among the nations, even in ages that were accounted rude and illiterate. One would have hoped that afterwards in the ages of learning and philosophy, a doctrine so useful to mankind, and so agreeable to right reason, would have acquired new strength. But the fact was otherwise: many of those who pretended to a wisdom and penetration above the vulgar, quitting the antient traditions, and affecting to govern themselves by the pure dictates of reason, absolutely denied the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and a future state, and exploded it as a vulgar error, unworthy of men of sense, and fit only to be left to the unthinking multitude. There were whole sects of philosophers, whose professed tenet it was, that the soul died with the body. Such were Democritus and his followers, the Cynics, Cyrenaics, and especially the numerous and wide extended sect of the Epicureans: and many other philosophers agreed with them in this point. The several sorts of Sceptics, according to their manner, employed all the subtilty they were masters of against the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and a future state, as well as

against other articles of popular belief. The famous Aristotle expresses himself in such a manner as leaves his greatest admirers in doubt what his real sentiments were on this subject. Plutarch seems to give it as Aristotle's opinion, "that death belongs only to the body, not to the soul; for that there is no death of the soul." *Θάνατον εἶναι μόνον τῷ σώματι, ἢ ψυχῇ, ταύτης γὰρ ἔχ' ὑπάρχει θάνατος* (*c*). But in the first book of the Nicomachian Ethics, the eleventh chapter, having put the question, whether any man can be happy after death, Aristotle intimates that it would be altogether absurd for those to say so, who make happiness to consist in operation, which was his own opinion (*d*). And in the end of that chapter he represents it as a matter of doubt and dispute, concerning those that are dead, whether they are partakers of any good, or of the contrary (*e*). But in the third book of those Ethics, the ninth chapter, he himself seems plainly to determine that point in the negative. He there asserts, that "death is the most dreadful of all things: for that it is the end [of our existence]: and that to him that is dead there seems nothing farther to remain, whether good or evil." *Φοβεράτατον δὲ ὁ θάνατος, πέρας γὰρ, καὶ ἔδὴν ἔτι τῷ τεθνεώτι δοκεῖ, ἢτε ἀγαθόν, ἢτε κακὸν εἶναι* (*f*). Origen who was well acquainted with the doctrine of the philosophers, says, that Aristotle, after having been for twenty years a hearer of Plato, going off from his master, accused his doctrine of the immortality of the soul (*g*); and Atticus a noted Platonic philosopher directly charges

(*c*) Plutarch. de Placit. Philos. lib. v. cap. 25.

(*d*) Aristot. Oper. tom. II. p. 13. B. edit. Paris 1629.

(*e*) Ibid. p. 15. A.

(*f*) Ibid. tom. II. p. 36. B.

(*g*) Origen cont. Cels. lib. ii. p. 67. edit. Spenser.

him with denying it. (*h*). Dicæarchus an eminent Peripatetic philosopher, whom Cicero highly commends, writ books to prove that souls are mortal (*i*). Others of the Peripatetics were of the same opinion. Many of them held, as Stobæus informs us, that the soul is a mere quality, like the harmony of a musical instrument, which vanishes when the body is dissolved, and suddenly passes into a state of non-existence. *Εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι μετέσταναι* (*k*). What that great man Cicero says of the philosophers in his time is remarkable. In that celebrated treatise where he sets himself to prove the immortality of the soul, he represents the contrary as the prevailing opinion; that there were crowds of opponents, not the Epicureans only, but, which he could not well account for, those that were esteemed the most learned persons had that doctrine in contempt. “*Catervæ veniunt contradicentium, nec solùm Epicureorum, sed nescio quomodo doctissimus quisque contemnit* (*l*).” There needs no more to convince any man of the strange confusion among the philosophers on this head, than to read the account Cicero gives of their various sentiments concerning the nature of the soul. Some said it was the heart, others the blood, others the brain, others breath, others fire, others said it was nothing but an empty name, others that it was harmony, others that it was number, others that it was of a threefold nature of which the rational soul is the principal, others supposed it to be a fifth essence. Many held it not to be distinct from the bodily temperament: and of those who held it to be distinct from the body, some were of opinion that it was extinguished with it at death,

(*h*) Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. lib. xv. cap. 5.

(*i*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 31.

(*k*) Stob. Eclog. Phys. p. 116. edit. Plantin.

(*l*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 31.

or at least that it was soon after dissipated, and did not continue long (*m*). Seneca says, "there are innumerable questions about the soul, whence it comes, of what quality it is, when it begins to be, how long it shall continue, and whether it passes from one place to another, and changes its habitation, being cast into different forms of animals." "Innumerabiles sunt quæstiones de animo: unde sit, qualis sit, quando esse incipiat, quamdiu sit, an aliunde aliò transeat, et domicilium mutet, ad alias animantium formas aliasque conjectus (*n*)." The reader may also consult what Plutarch says concerning the different opinions of philosophers on the nature of the soul, in his treatise de Placit. Philos. lib. iv. cap. 2, 3. (*o*). The famous Galen, who was a man of great learning and abilities, was particularly inquisitive about the nature of the human soul, but could not come to any satisfaction about it. He declares, that he was quite ignorant of the nature of the soul, but that he violently suspected that its essence is corporeal, which he was led to think by observing that it depends in all its powers and operations upon the dispositions and temperament of the body. (*p*).

In enquiring into the opinions of the philosophers on this subject, it is particularly proper to take notice of the Stoics. As none of the philosophers were stricter moralists, or professed greater zeal for the cause of virtue than they did, one might be apt to expect, that they would have been strong advocates for the immortality of the soul, and a fu-

(*m*) Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 9, 10, 11.

(*n*) Senec. Epist. 88.

(*o*) Plutarch. Oper. tom. II. p. 898. edit. Xyl.

(*p*) Galen quod animi mores, &c. cap. 1, 2, 3. 5. 9. as cited by Dr. Campbell, Neces. Revel. p. 185. et seq. where the reader may see it at large.



ture state of rewards and punishments. But this was far from being the case. Lactantius indeed tells us concerning Zeno the father of the Stoic sect, that he taught that "the abodes of good men in the subterraneous regions were distinct and separate from those of the wicked; the former inhabit pleasant and delightful regions, the latter suffer punishments in dark places, and in horrid gulphs full of filth and nastiness." "*Esse inferos Zeno Stoicus docuit, et sedes piorum ab impiis esse discretas, et illos quidem quietas et delectabiles incolere regiones, hos verò luere pœnas in tenebrosis locis atque cœni voraginibus horrendis (q).*" This was agreeable to the representations made of these things in the mysteries. And it might well be, that Zeno expressed the popular opinion in this matter rather than his own. But whatever were his sentiments upon it, certain it is that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, was not the professed doctrine of his school, nor was it ever reckoned among the avowed principles of the Stoic sect. I cannot indeed say with a very learned writer, "we know that the philosophic principle of his school was that the soul died with the body," for which he refers to Plutarch's treatise *de Placit. Philos. lib. iv. cap. 7*. But Plutarch there only gives it as their opinion, that when the soul goes out of the body, "that of the weaker, that is, of the unlearned, is mixed with the concretions, or earthly elements; but that which is more strong and vigorous, such as are the souls of the wise, shall continue to the conflagration." And he there distinguishes the sentiments of the Stoics from that of Democritus and Epicurus, who, he says, taught that the soul is corruptible, and perisheth with

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(q) Lactan. *Divin. Instit. lib. vii. cap. 7.*

the body. Cicero expressly ascribeth to the Stoics the opinion that the soul surviveth the body, and subsisteth in a separate state for some time after death, but not always. "Aiunt manere animos cum à corpore excesserint, sed non semper." And he blames them, for that when they acknowledged that the soul continues to subsist separately from the body, which is the most difficult part of the controversy, yet they would not allow that which is the natural consequence of it, that the soul shall never die (*r*). Agreeable to this is that which Laertius saith, that the Stoics held that "the soul remaineth after death, but that it is corruptible." *Ψυχὴν μετὰ θανάτου ἐπιμένειν. φθαρτὴν δὲ εἶναι* (*s*). The same Laertius informs us, that Cleanthes maintained, that all souls shall continue to the conflagration; Chrysippus, that only the souls of the wise shall continue so long (*t*). Numenius, as cited by Eusebius, *Præp. Evan.* lib. xv. cap. 20. gives it as the opinion of many of the Stoics, that "the soul is corruptible, but does not die or perish immediately upon its departure from the body, but continues for some time by itself, that which is wise to the dissolution of all things, that of fools for some short time." It is however true that some of the Stoics seem to have held that the soul dies immediately with the body, or at least that it is immediately resolved or resumed into one common nature, or the universal soul, so as to lose its individual existence. Some passages in Epictetus and Antoninus seem to look this way. From all which it may be gathered that the Stoics had very confused notions on this head, and seem not to have formed any settled or con-

(*r*) *Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 32.*

(*s*) *Laert. lib. vii. segm. 156.*

(*t*) *Ibid. segm. 137.* See also Menagius's observations upon it, p. 326. edit. Wetstein.

sistent scheme. It is observed in a note on the excellent translation of Antoninus's *Meditations* published at Glasgow, that "the Stoics spoke doubtfully about a future state, whether the rational souls subsisted as separate intelligences, or were absorbed in the Divinity. Many believed a separate existence of good souls for a thousand years, and of the eminently virtuous for eternity, in the dignity of gods, which we would call that of angels, with delegated powers for governing certain parts of the universe (*u*)."<sup>u</sup> To which may be added, what is said in another note, "that we cannot conclude from their speaking of the re-union after death, that individual persons cease to be distinct persons from the Deity, and from each other; since it was the known tenet of the Stoics, that heroic souls were called to the dignity of gods or immortal angels; and they mean no more than an entire moral union by resignation and a complete conformity of will (*v*)."<sup>v</sup> But this does not seem to me to be a just representation of the Stoical doctrine. They certainly meant more by the re-union into the universal soul than a moral union or conformity to the will of God. It is capable of a clear proof from the best of the antient writers who have mentioned it, that this re-union of the soul was understood not merely in a moral but in a physical sense. The reader may see this fully proved by the learned and judicious author of the "*Critical Enquiry into the Opinions and Practices of the antient Philosophers concerning the Nature of the Soul and a future State*," ch. v. where there is an accurate account given of the opinion of the Stoics in this matter. At present I shall only observe that it is a known part of the Stoical doctrine, that at certain periods and conflagrations,

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(*u*) See the Glasgow translation of Antoninus, p. 226.

(*v*) *Ibid.* p. 454.

a succession of which they believed would happen, all things were to be consumed and resolved into the substance of God himself, which they supposed to be of a fiery nature: that nothing would remain but the chief God, and that all the other gods, much more the heroic souls, were corruptible and would die. For which notion they are severely exposed by Plutarch in his two treatises against the Stoics. To this notion Epictetus refers when he talks of "Jupiter's being alone at the conflagration, and having neither Juno, nor Pallas, nor Apollo, nor brother, nor son, nor dependent, nor relation (*x*)."  
Seneca speaking of the conflagration or dissolution of the world, saith, that "those souls which were happy, and had obtained eternal felicity, shall then be involved in the common ruin, and return to the antient elements." "*Nos quoque felices animæ, et æterna sortitæ, cum Deo visum erit iterum ista moliri, labentibus cunctis, et ipsi parva ruinæ ingentis accessio, in antiqua elementa vertemur (y).*" Thus it was to be even with the most privileged souls. The Stoics therefore did not believe, as is supposed in the above-mentioned note, that eminently virtuous souls were to continue in a separate existence, and in the dignity of gods to eternity, except by eternity be meant no more than Seneca intends by his "*felices animæ et æterna sortitæ,*" which yet were to be consumed at the general conflagration. But as to the common kind of souls, they were in the opinion of many of the Stoics, to be immediately refunded into the "*anima mundi,*" and thereby lose their individual existence much sooner (*z*).

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(*x*) Epictet. Dissert. book iii. chap. 13. sect. 1.

(*y*) Senec. in Consol. ad Marciam, in fine.

(*z*) It is to be observed that these periodical conflagrations were designed to be so many renovations of the world. All things were



The three most eminent Stoics, whose writings are come down to us, are Seneca, Epictetus, and the emperor Marcus Antoninus. As to the first of these great men, he seems to

to be refunded into the divine substance in order to their being produced anew. Many of the Stoics supposed, that then the same order and course of things in every respect would be repeated which was before: the very same persons would appear again on this earthly stage, and act their whole former life again, exactly in the same manner as they had done before, and be subject in every thing to the same events and accidents. Others who saw the inconveniency of this, explained it not of the very same individual persons, but of other persons perfectly similar to them, and exactly resembling them in their characters, actions, and all the circumstances which attended them. They held that such revolutions always have been, and always shall be repeated in a perpetual succession throughout an infinite duration, and they supposed them to be the effects of physical necessity\*. It is evident that upon this hypothesis, there could be no proper state of future retributions. The same face and state of things is continually to return at certain periods: and the present seemingly unequal dispensations of Providence to be repeated and renewed.

It may not be improper to observe here, that the notion of successive dissolutions and renovations of the world has penetrated to the farthest parts of the East, and perhaps from the East it was originally derived. F. Longobardi, whom I have cited before, in his treatise concerning the learned sect in China, observes that it is a doctrine of theirs, that when the years of the world's continuance are at an end, and among the rest Tien Chu, and Xang-ti, the Lord of Heaven, or King of the upper Region: all things shall return to the first principle, which shall produce another

\* Concerning this see Numenius apud Euseb. *Præpar. Evangel.* lib. xv. cap. 18 et 19. And Nemes. de Fato, cap. 38.—The reader may see these and other testimonies produced by the learned author of the *Critical Enquiry* above-mentioned, ch. v.—To this Antoninus refers, when he talks of the periodical renovation of the whole or of the universe.—*Τὴν περιοδικὴν παλιγγενεσίαν τῶν ὅλων.* Anton. *Medit.* book xi. sect. 1. See also *ibid.* book v. sect. 13. 32. and book x. sect. 7.

have been strangely unsettled in his notions with regard to the immortality of the soul, and a future state. Sometimes he speaks in a clear and noble manner of the happiness of souls after death, when freed from the incumbrance of the body, and received into the place or region of departed souls. See his *Consol. ad Polyb. cap. 28. et Consol. ad Marc. cap. 25.* But especially his 102d epistle to Lucilius, where he has some sublime thoughts on this subject; and among other things declares, that the last day of this present life is to be regarded as the birth-day of an eternal one. “*Dies iste quem tanquam extremum reformidas æterni natalis est.*” At other times he expresses himself with great doubt and uncertainty. In that very epistle to Lucilius, he represents it as a kind of pleasing dream, and that it was an opinion embraced by great men, very agreeable indeed, but which they promised rather than proved. “*Credebam facile opinionibus magnorum virorum rem gratissimam promittentium magis quam probantium.*” And in his sixty-third epistle, “*Perhaps,*” saith he, “if the report of wise men be true, and some place receives us after death, he whom we think to have perished is only sent before.” “*Fortasse, si modo sapientum vera fama est, recipitque nos locus aliquis, quem putamus perisse, præmissus est.*” And again, in his seventy-sixth epistle, “If it be so, (says he,) that souls remain after they are set loose from the body, a happier state awaits them, than whilst they are

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world after the same manner. And this also ending, another will succeed, and so another without end. And he observes, that the interval between the beginning and end of the world is called by them the great year. See F. Longobardi's treatise in the fifth book of Navarette's account of the empire of China, p. 184. The Stoics also called the interval between the periodical conflagrations the great year. Euseb. *Præp. Evang. lib. xv. cap. 19.*

in the body.” “Si modo solutæ corporibus animæ manent, felicior illis status restat, quàm est dum versantur in corpore.”

These, and other passages of the like kind, shew the doubt and uncertainty he was in; but he sometimes carries it farther, and seems plainly to deny that the soul has any existence after death, or at least that it has any sense of good or evil. What he says in his 55th epistle to Lucilius is very remarkable to this purpose. He tells him of a violent disorder which seized him on a sudden, and seemed to threaten immediate death. And he informs him what the thoughts were which supported and comforted him, even when he was, as he thought, in his last agony: “Ego vero et in ipsa suffocatione non desii cogitationibus lætis ac fortibus acquiescere.” And what was it that yielded him comfort in a dying hour? Was it the hope of a happy immortal existence beyond the grave, of which he sometimes speaks in magnificent terms? No; but it was the thought, that he should be in the same insensible state after death that he was in before he was born, and should return to a state of non-existence (a). “I have had long experience of death

(a) “Ego illam [mortem] diu expertus sum. Quamdiu, inquis? Antequàm nascerer. Mors est non esse: id quale sit, jam scio: hoc erit post me, quod ante me fuit: siquid in hac re tormenti est, necesse erit, et fuisse antequam prodiremus in lucem. Atqui nullam sensimus tunc vexationem. Rogo, non stultissimum dicas, siquis existimet lucernæ pejus esse cum extincta est, quam antequam accenderetur? Nos quoque et accendimur et extinguimur: medio illo tempore aliquid patimur: utrobique autem alta securitas est. In hoc enim, mi Lucili, nisi fallor, erramus quod mortem judicamus sequi, quum illa et precesserit, et secutura sit. Quicquid ante nos fuit mors est. Quid enim refert utrùm non incipias, an desinas? Utriusque rei hic est effectus, non esse.” Senec. epist. 55. edit. Commelin. 1594.

(says he). How long? say you. Before I was born. Death is not to be: what that is, I already know. That shall be after me which was before me. If there be any torment in this, we must needs have experienced it, before we came into the light. But we then felt no vexation. Would you not think it a very foolish thing, if any man should think that the candle is in a worse condition after it is put out, than before it was lighted? We also are lighted and extinguished. We suffer something in the interval between these, but both before and after there is a profound security. For in this, my Lucilius, if I be not mistaken, we err, that we imagine death only to follow, whereas it both went before this life, and shall follow after it. Whatsoever was before us is death. For where is the difference between not beginning to be at all, and ceasing to exist? The effect of both is the same, not to be." He repeats the same thought in *Consol. ad Polyb. cap. 27.* as also in *Consol. ad Marciam, cap. 19.* where he absolutely rejects the notion of future punishments, and asserts, that a dead man is affected with no evils, but is in the same state of tranquillity he was in before he was born (*b*). Again he says, that no sense of evil can reach to him that is dead: which he proves, because nothing can hurt him who is not. "*Nullum mali sensum ad eum qui perit pervenire; nam si pervenit non periit, nulla inquam, eum res lædit qui nullus est* (*c*)."

That excellent Stoic Epictetus never takes any notice of

(*b*) Torquatus the Epicurean, who defends the Epicurean system in Cicero's first book *De Finibus*, talks after the same manner: "*Robustus et excellens animus, omni est liber curâ et angore, cum et mortem contemnit, quâ qui adfecti sunt, eadem causa sunt quâ, antequâm nati, et ad dolores ita paratus est, ut meminerit maximos morte finire.*" *De Finib. lib. i. cap. 15. p. 50.* edit. Davis.

(*c*) *Sen. epist. 99.*



a future state of rewards and punishments; though, had he been persuaded of the truth of them, the subjects he treats of would have led him to mention them: especially considering that he treats things in a popular way, and designed his philosophy not merely for speculation, but for use. He frequently asserts, as I had occasion to observe before, that a good man needs no other reward than his goodness and virtue, nor has the wicked man any other punishment than his own vices. And the comfort he gives against death is, that it is natural and necessary; and therefore can be no evil, for all evils may be avoided. He elsewhere observes, that at death we go to nothing dreadful. We then return to the elements of which we were made, fire, air, earth, and water. There is no Hades, nor Acheron, nor Cocytus, nor Pyriphlegethon: but all is full of gods and dæmons (*d*).

That great emperor and philosopher Marcus Antoninus, always expresses himself very doubtfully on this point, as the learned Gataker, who was so well acquainted with his works, and his great admirer, observes, “*De statu animorum post mortem ambigendo passim Marcus sermonem instituit (e).*” And again, “*De animi statu post mortem incertus fluctuat passim Marcus (f).*” He generally speaks of it waveringly, and in a way of alternative. “Concerning death (says he) it is either a dispersion, or atoms, or exinanition *κένωσις*, or an extinction, or a translation to another state.” *ἢ τοι οὕτως ἢ μετασυσσις (g)*. And again, “Remember (says he) that either this corporeal mixture must be dispersed, or that the spirit of life must be either extinguish-

(*d*) Epict. Dissert. book iii. chap. 13. sect. 1.

(*e*) Gataker Annot. in Anton. p. 91.

(*f*) Ibid. p. 423.

(*g*) Anton. Medit. book vii. sect. 32.

ed or removed, and brought into another place (*h*).” And in another passage he supposes, that as dead bodies, after remaining a while in the earth, are changed and dissipated, to make room for other bodies, so the animal souls removed to the air, after they have remained some time, are changed, diffused, rekindled, and resumed into the original productive spirit, [*εἰς τὸν τᾶν ὅλων σπερματικὸν λόγον*, into the seminal reason of the universe] and give place to other souls in like manner to cohabit with them.” He adds, that “this answer may be made on supposition that the souls survive their bodies (*i*).” Gataker observes in his annotations upon this passage, that Antoninus does not seem here to think that souls shall continue to the conflagration, but shall be extinguished or resumed sooner, that they may give place to other souls. And he adds, that “the Stoics dreamed of one common universal soul, from whence all other souls were as it were cut off, or which was a kind of fountain of all the rest, and into which they were all to be again refunded (*k*).” I shall only mention one passage more of Antoninus, in which after having said, “I consist of an active and a material principle,” he adds, “every part of me shall be disposed, upon its dissolution, into the correspondent part of the universe; and that again shall be changed into some other part of the universe, and thus to eternity (*l*).” To this may be added, what was taken notice of before, that neither Antoninus nor Epictetus ever give the least hint of

(*h*) Anton. Medit. book viii. sect. 25.

(*i*) Ibid. iv. sect. 21. Glasgow translation.

(*k*) “Unam animam communem et universalem somniabant Stoici, unde reliquæ omnes essent quasi decisæ, sive quæ reliquarum omnium fons quidam existeret, in quem etiam denuò quasi refunderenter.” Gat. Annot. in Antonin. p. 141.

(*l*) Anton. Med. book v. sect. 13. See also book vii. sect. 10.

men's being judged or called to an account after death for their conduct in this life, or that the wicked shall be punished in a future state.

It is observed by the celebrated Mons. de Montesquieu, that "the religion of Confucius denies the immortality of the soul, and the sect of Zeno did not believe it."—"La religion de Confucius nie l'immortalité de l'ame, et la secte de Zenon ne la croyoit pas (*m*)."<sup>(m)</sup> I have already considered the sentiments of the sect of Zeno on this head. As to the famous Chinese philosopher Confucius and his disciples, who, like the Stoics, have always professed to make morals their chief study, it appears by the best accounts which are given of them, that they do not acknowledge the immortality of the soul and a state of future retributions. Father Navarette, who was a long time in China, and well acquainted with their books, affirms, that Confucius knew nothing of the rewards and punishments of another life (*n*).<sup>(n)</sup> He also observes concerning the second great Chinese philosopher Meng Zu, who lived one hundred years after Confucius, and to whom the Chinese erect temples, holding him in great veneration next to Confucius, that he has admirable moral sentences; but in his books there is not the least appearance of his having the knowledge of God, of the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishments of a future life: and he would have mentioned this in his writings, if he had found any such thing in the doctrine of Confucius, which he diligently learned and studied (*o*).<sup>(o)</sup> The same author observes, that the Chinese

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(*m*) L'Esprit des Loix, Vol. II. liv. 24. chap. 19. p. 166. edit. Edinb.

(*n*) See his Account of the Empire of China, in the first volume of Churchill's Collection of Travels and Voyages, p. 113.

(*o*) Ibid. p. 139.

often speak of heaven's rewarding the virtuous and punishing the wicked; but that most certain it is, that they speak not of what is in the other life, but in this. They look upon rewards and punishments to be the natural and necessary attendants of virtue and vice, which accompany them as the shadow does the body (*p*). F. Longobardi, in the treatise I have cited before, says it is the general opinion of the Chinese, that he who does well shall be naturally and of necessity rewarded, and he that does ill punished; as he is warmed that draws near the fire, and he grows cold that is in the snow (*q*). The same father shews, both from their classical books of greatest authority, and from the unanimous profession of the most learned mandarins, that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments is not received or acknowledged by the learned sect. Speaking of himself and other missionaries that were with him, he says, "We asked doctor King Lun Ju, a mandarin of the court of rites, whether, according to the sect of the learned, there was any reward or punishment in the other life? He laughed at the question; and then answered, that it could not be denied that there were virtues and vices in this world; but that all ended with death, when the man in whom were these things expired: and therefore there was no need of providing for the next life, but only for this." F. Longobardi produces several other testimonies to the same purpose, which I need not particularly mention, and declares, that he had often conversed with their most learned mandarins in several parts of China during the time he resided there, and

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(*p*) See his Account of the Empire of China, in the first volume of Churchill's Collection of Travels and Voyages, p. 137, 138.

(*q*) Ibid. p. 185.



found that they all agreed unanimously in this (*r*). He also mentions a conversation he had with Dr. Michael, a learned Chinese Christian, who himself was of the sect of the learned, and perfectly well acquainted with their tenets, and

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(*r*) Navarette's Account of the empire of China, in the first volume of Churchill's Collection of Voyages and Travels, p. 197, 198. I shall on this occasion mention what a mandarin said to F. Math. Riccio when he discoursed with him about the Christian faith, and eternal life. After having treated what the father had said concerning a future state as nothing but talk and vain words, which the wind driveth away, the mandarin plainly declared, that he looked for no higher happiness than what ariseth from things present and visible. "What we see (said he) is the advantage of governing and commanding others. Gold, silver, wives and concubines, as also a numerous train, goods, feastings, diversions, and all sorts of happiness, honour and glory, are the consequences of being a mandarin. This is the happiness we covet, and which we enjoy in our great and mighty empire; and not the happiness you talk of, which is as unprofitable as it is invisible, and impossible to obtain." And in this he seems to have spoke the sense of the mandarins in general. These notions of theirs have a very bad influence on their moral conduct. As they look upon the enjoyment of this present world, its riches, honours, and pleasures, to be the highest and only happiness, they stick at no methods, how unfair or unjust soever, to obtain them. It is agreed by all, even by those that are most prejudiced in favour of the Chinese, that though the learned mandarins speak highly of virtue, and profess to make the doctrine of morals, and the good order of the state in general, and the happiness of each particular person, their whole study, there is a great and general corruption among them, and little regard is had to justice and honesty, but every thing is carried by the force of money at their tribunals. See among others, Gemelli Carreri's Account of China, in his Voyage round the World, Part IV. book ii. chap. 4. p. 310. and *ibid.* chap. vii. p. 328. 330. in Churchill's Collection of Travels, &c. Vol. IV.

was one of those who were willing, as far as possible, to interpret them so as to bring them to a conformity with the Christian doctrine. Being asked by the father, "Whether after death there be any rewards or punishments for good or wicked men according to the doctrine of the learned sect? He answered, they make no mention of any such things. Here he sighed, and complained of the professors of that sect, for not teaching the things of another life: which, said he, is the cause that the multitude is not encouraged to practise virtue in earnest. And he commended the sect of Foe for preaching up heaven and hell (*s*)."

Confucius being asked by one of his disciples what angels or spirits are, answered, that they are air. And this is the notion that the Chinese have of the soul. They look upon it to be a material thing, though highly rarified: and that when the soul is separated from the body, both of them lose the individual being they had before, and nothing remains but the substance of heaven and earth, which had before concurred to the composition of man, and which, as general causes, ever continue in their substantial being, and are only changed in their accidental forms (*t*).

This may suffice concerning the opinions of the learned sect in China, with respect to the immortality of the soul, and a future state of retributions. The reader may also consult to the same purpose a tract of a Chinese philosopher in Du Halde's collection of Chinese pieces, in the third volume of his History of China.

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(*s*) Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, in the first volume of Churchill's Collection of Travels and Voyages, p. 199.

(*t*) Ibid. p. 195.

## CHAPTER IV.

Concerning the philosophers who professed to believe and teach the immortality of the soul. Of these Pythagoras is generally esteemed one of the most eminent. His doctrine on this head shewn to be not well consistent with a state of future rewards and punishments. Socrates believed the immortality of the soul, and a future state, and argued for it. In this he was followed by Plato. The Doctrine of Cicero with regard to the immortality of the soul considered. As also that of Plutarch.

IT sufficiently appears from what was observed in the former chapter, what confusion there was among the Hea-then Philosophers, with regard to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and a future state: that great numbers of them absolutely denied it; and others treated it as a mere uncertainty, and did not teach it as a doctrine of their schools.

But then it must be acknowledged, that there were other celebrated philosophers whose professed tenet it was that the soul is immortal. This is said to have been the doctrine of the Persian Magi, and the Indian Gymnosophists (*u*). But what I shall particularly consider is the doctrine of those among the Greek philosophers, who held the immortality of the soul. Of these the most eminent were the Pythagoreans and Platonists. Let us therefore enquire into their sentiments on this head, and whether they were likely to lead the people into right notions concerning it, and which might be of real service to the cause of religion and virtue.

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(*u*) Concerning the Indian Gymnosophists, and the wrong use they and others made of this doctrine, see what is said above, p. 198, 199. of this volume.

The Pythagoreans were generally reckoned among the most strenuous asserters of the immortality of the soul: but in asserting it they went upon a wrong principle. Pythagoras, as was observed before (*x*), taught that the soul was a part of the divinity or universal soul, which was every where diffused; and in this, as Cicero assures us, he was followed by all the Pythagoreans (*y*). And hence he argued, that the soul is immortal; because that out of which it is discerped is immortal (*z*). Plutarch asserts, that Pythagoras and Plato held, that the soul is immortal or incorruptible, "because when it departs out of the body, it goes to the soul of the universe, to that which is congenial with itself." *Πρὸς τὸ ὁμογενὲς* (*a*). But then this returning into the soul of the world must not be understood, according to Pythagoras's notion, to take place immediately, till after the soul had gone through several transmigrations. For it is a known doctrine of his, that the souls of men after death transmigrate from one body to another, and even to the bodies of beasts as well as men. Porphyry, after having observed that what Pythagoras delivered to his auditors, i. e. to his own proper disciples, cannot be certainly affirmed, for there was a great and strict silence observed amongst them, says, that his doctrines known to all are these: first, that "the soul is immortal, then that it enters into other kinds of living creatures." He held also, that, "after certain periods, the things that were formerly done are done over again." Or, as Mr. Stanley renders it, "the same things that are now generated are generated again, and that

(*x*) See here above, Vol. I. chap. xii.

(*y*) Cic. Cato Major, cap. 21. et De Nat. Deor. lib. i. cap. 11.

(*z*) Laert. lib. vii. segm. 28.

(*a*) Plutarch. de Placit. Philos. lib. iv. cap. 11.



there is nothing absolutely new: and that all animals are near a-kin, and of a like kind (b)."

Diodorus Siculus affirms, that he learned his doctrine of the transmigration of souls from the Egyptians (c). And Herodotus informs us, that the antient Egyptians said, "that the soul of man is immortal, and that the body being corrupted, the soul goes into the body of one animal after another, and after it has gone round, *περίελθῆ*, or performed its circuit, through all terrestrial and marine animals and birds, it again entereth into some human body, and that this circuit or circumvolution was completed in three thousand years." He adds, that this opinion some of the Greeks usurped, as if it was their own invention, and that he knew their names, but chose not to mention them, in which probably he had a particular view to Pythagoras (d). This transmigration of souls taught by the Egyptians, as here represented by Herodotus, seems to be physical, and necessary by a natural and fatal necessity, and is a quite different thing from a future state of rewards and punishments designed for moral purposes. Agreeable to this is the representation Laertius makes of Pythagoras's doctrine, That "the soul, passing through the circle of necessity, lives at several times in different living creatures (e)." But he is mistaken in supposing Pythagoras to have been the first author of this doctrine, for the Egyptians had taught it before him. But though this transmigration as taught by the Egyptians, according to Herodotus, was natural and necessary, yet they endeavoured so to explain it, as to

(b) Porphyr. *Vita Pythag.*

(c) *Biblioth. lib. i. p. 86. et Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. lib. x. cap. 8. p. 482.*

(d) *Herod. lib. ii.*

(e) *Laert. lib. viii. segm. 14.*

apply it to moral purposes. And so also Pythagoras seems to have done, at least in his popular discourses. Laertius tells us, that "he held that the soul being cast out upon the earth, wanders in the air, like to a body, and that Mercury is the keeper and conductor of souls, and brings them out of bodies, both from earth and sea: and that pure souls are led into high places; but that the impure neither come near them, nor to one another, but are bound by the furies into indissoluble chains (*f*).” Theodoret represents it as his opinion as well as that of Plato, that "souls are pre-existent to bodies, and that those which transgress are sent again into bodies, that being purified by such discipline, they may return to their own place: that those which whilst they are in the body lead a wicked life, are sent down farther into irrational creatures, hereby to receive punishment and right expiation; the angry and malicious into serpents, the ravenous into wolves, the audacious into lions, the fraudulent into foxes, and the like (*g*).” Timæus the Locrian, an eminent Pythagorean, in that celebrated passage at the end of his treatise of the Soul of the world, gives pretty much the same account. That "souls transmigrate or change their habitations: those of the cowards and effeminate are thrust into the bodies of women; those of murderers, into the bodies of savage beasts; the lascivious, into the forms of boars or swine; the vain and inconstant are changed into birds, and the slothful and ignorant into fishes (*h*).” He represents it as necessary to teach these things to the people, and to instil into them the

(*f*) Laert. lib. viii. segm. 31.

(*g*) Stanley's History of Philosophy, p. 559. edit. 2d, Lond.

(*h*) The reader may see the whole passage quoted from the original, and elegantly translated. Divine Legation of Moses, Vol. II. book iii. p. 143, 144. edit. 4th.

dread of foreign torments: though he plainly intimates, that they were false relations, and that he himself did not believe them to be literally true, which probably was the case of Pythagoras himself. Ovid, in his *Metamorphosis*, introduces Pythagoras as delivering his doctrine to the people of Crotona, and represents him as directing them not to be afraid of punishments after death, of Styx, darkness, vain names, and false terrors: that they were not to think that the body can feel any evil; and as to the souls, they are immortal, and are always changing their habitations, and leaving their former abodes, are received into new ones.

“ O genus attonitum stolidæ formidine mortis!  
 Quid Styga, quid tenebras, et nomina vana timetis,  
 Materiem vatum, falsique piacula mundi?  
 Corpora sive rogos flamma, seu tabe vetustas  
 Abstulerit, mala posse pati non ulla putetis.  
 Morte carent animæ, semperque priore relictâ  
 Sede, novis domibus vivunt, habitantque receptæ.”

*Metamorph. lib. xv. ver. 153. et seq.*

Mr. Sandys translates it thus:

“ O you, whom horrors of cold death affright,  
 Why fear you Styx, vain names, and endless night,  
 The dreams of poets, and feign'd miseries  
 Of forged hell? Whether last flames surprize,  
 Or age devours your bodies; they nor grieve,  
 Nor suffer pain Our souls forever live:  
 Yet evermore their antient houses leave  
 To live in new, which them as guests receive.”

Ovid here represents Pythagoras as maintaining perpetual transmigrations of the soul into other bodies, and this by a kind of physical necessity: which seems not well to consist with what Plutarch gives as Pythagoras's opinion, that

the soul, when it departs out of the body, recedes to the soul of the world, as being of the same kind with it.

It is farther to be observed, that though Pythagoras seemed to make a transmigration into other bodies common and necessary to all souls; yet he made an exception in favour of some highly privileged souls, as if they were exempted from the common law and necessity to which others are subject. Laertius represents it as one of his tenets, that some souls become dæmons and heroes (*i*). And the golden verses of Pythagoras, which contain a summary of his moral doctrine, conclude with promising to him who should obey his precepts, that he should, upon leaving the body, go into the free æther, and become an immortal god, incorruptible, and no more obnoxious to death.

Whosoever impartially considers and compares the different accounts that are given us of the Pythagoric doctrine, will find it very difficult to form them into a consistent scheme. Plutarch, as was before observed, represents it as Pythagoras's opinion, that the souls of men return to the universal soul, out of which they were taken, immediately upon their quitting the body (*k*). But if that were the case,

(*i*) Laert. lib. viii. segm. 32. Plutarch ascribes the same opinion, not only to Pythagoras, but to Thales, Plato, and the Stoics. De Placit. Philos. lib. i. cap. 8. Oper. tom. II. p. 882. edit. Xyl.

(*k*) In like manner Numenius represents it as the doctrine of some of the Stoics, who, as well as the Pythagoreans, held the re-fusion of the soul into the universal nature, that the "soul of the universe was eternal, and other souls would be mixed with it at death, ἐπὶ τελευτῇ." Apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. xv. cap. 20. And Antoninus in a passage cited above, p. 296. supposes that souls shall continue after leaving the body, for some short time in the air, and then be resumed into the universal soul. And he elsewhere speaks of the resumption of the active principle, or the soul, into the intelligence of the whole, as done τὰχιστα, "very



it must be said, either that there are no transmigrations at all, which is contrary to Pythagoras's known opinion, or that after the soul has been for a while re-united to the universal soul of the world, it is again separated from it, in order to animate other bodies, and undergo different transmigrations. Others represent Pythagoras's doctrine, as if the transmigration of souls were to commence immediately upon their departure out of the body, and that after having accomplished the course of transmigrations appointed them, they should be refunded into the universal soul.

Some authors, who in this as well as other instances affix Christian ideas to the passages they meet with in Pagan authors, have represented this refusion of the soul as a state of complete happiness, peculiar to the souls of good men, and consisting in the beatific vision and enjoyment of the Deity. But this is not the idea the Pagan writers themselves give us of it. The learned and ingenious author of the *Critical Enquiry*, &c. whom I have before referred to, has proved by express testimonies, that this refusion of the soul was not supposed to be a privilege peculiar to the righteous and innocent; that all souls without distinction were to be absorbed at length into the universal soul, and that this refusion was of a physical nature, not properly for any moral purpose or design, but to furnish the "*anima mundi*" with materials for the reproduction and renovation of things (*l*). If there were any happiness for departed souls, it was to be before the refusion, which was supposed to put an end to their separate individual existence (*m*).

soon, *quam celerrime*," as Gataker renders it. Anton. lib. vii. sect. 10.

(*l*) See *Critical Enquiry into the Opinions of the Antients*, &c. chap. 5.

(*m*) They explained it, as an eminent writer observes, by a bot-

Seneca has a remarkable passage in his 72d epistle, which it is proper to mention here. "Magnus animus Deo pareat, et quicquid lex universi jubet sine cunctatione patiatur." "Aut in meliorem emittitur vitam, lucidiùs tranquilliusque inter divina mansurus, aut certè sine ullo futurus incommodo, naturæ suæ remiscebitur, et revertetur in totum." Where he represents it as the part of a great mind cheerfully to submit to what the law of the universe requires, and that either he shall go free into a better life, where he shall remain in a luminous and serene abode among the gods, or he shall without any evil or inconvenience be remingled with his nature, and return into the whole. The utmost that he says of this re-union to the whole, is that the soul shall then be without any evil or inconvenience,

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the filled with sea-water, which, swimming a while upon the ocean, does upon the bottle's breaking mingle with common mass. To this purpose he cites a remarkable passage from Gaffendus, in which that very learned author says, "Vix ulli fuere (quæ humanæ mētis caligo et imbecillitas est) qui non inciderint in errorem illum de refusione in animam mundi. Nimirum sicut existimarunt singulorum animas particulas esse animæ mundanæ, quarum quæ libet suo corpore, ut aqua vase includitur, ita et reputârunt unamquamque animam, corpore dissoluto, quasi diffracto vase effluere, atque animæ mundi è quâ deducta fuerit iterum uniri." See *Divine Legation*, vol. II. book iii. sect. 4. p. 205, 206, 4th edition. Tertullian indeed tells us, that the Egyptian Hermes taught that the soul, when departed from the body, is not refunded into the nature of the universe, but retains its distinct determinate existence. "Mercurius Ægyptius animam digressam a corpore non refundi in naturam universi, sed manere determinatam." Tertul. de Anima, cap. 33. But besides that Trismegistus's writings are of suspected authority, it is here plainly implied, that if the human soul was refunded into the universal soul, which certainly was the common opinion of the Pagan philosophers, it would lose its individual existence,

“animus sine ullo futurus incommodo,” which, as the learned author of the Enquiry observes, is the account he elsewhere gives of death, on supposition of its being an extinction of our individual existence. “Death,” says he, “brings no evil or inconvenience along with it; for that must have an existence which is subject to any inconvenience.” “Mors nullum habet incommodum: esse enim debet aliquid, cujus sit incommodum.” Epist. 34. Pythagoras indeed supposed, as the Stoics did afterwards, that all things that were done in the former world were to be done again, when the soul of the universe was to go forth into new productions, and form another world at stated periodical revolutions, or at the end of the great year: but this was the effect of a physical necessity, and without any respect in a way of moral retribution to the good or evil actions which had been done in the former world.

I think therefore it may be justly said, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in the sense in which Pythagoras taught it, could be of no great advantage to mankind, with regard to the belief of a future state of rewards and punishments. And though those of his school generally so far asserted the immortality of the soul as to maintain that it did not die with the body, but lived to animate other bodies, yet some of them supposed death to be common to the soul and body, and expressed themselves in a manner which has a near affinity with the doctrine of Epicurus. This is what the learned author of the Critical Enquiry has shewn, to whom I refer the reader (*n*).

I shall conclude what relates to Pythagoras with observing, that we cannot lay any stress upon the doctrines he publicly taught, as containing his real sentiments, because

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(*n*) See the Critical Enquiry, &c. chap. i. p. 4, 5, 6. 1st edit.

he made no scruple of imposing upon the people things which he himself could not but know were false, and which, we may be sure, he did not himself believe. Several instances of his frauds might be produced; but I shall only mention one, relating to his celebrated doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Not content with affirming that doctrine in general, he pretended to mention the several transmigrations which he himself had undergone, and to name the particular persons whom his soul had animated in a succession of some ages, and that he himself had a distinct remembrance of it.

Let us next proceed to take some notice of Socrates and Plato, who are generally regarded as the principal of the antient Pagan philosophers before the coming of our Saviour, who taught the immortality of the soul and a future state. As to Socrates, the learned Bishop of Gloucester acknowledges that he really believed not only the immortality of the soul, but a state of future rewards and punishments, though he seems not willing to allow that any of the other antient philosophers believed it (*o*). His sentiments are most fully represented in Plato's *Phædo*, which contains the discourse he had with his friends the last day of his life, and in which he sets himself to prove the immortality of the soul. And though it is probable that Plato in this dialogue very much enlarges upon what Socrates then said to his friends and disciples, yet he had too great a regard to decency to put any thing upon him on such an occasion, but what was agreeable to his known sentiments. And if he had done so, others would not have failed to expose him for it. The same may be said of Socrates's apology as delivered by Plato.

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(*o*) Divine Legation of Moses, &c. vol. II. book iii. sect. 4. p. 235. 4th edit.



In the beginning of the *Phædo* Socrates declares to Cebes, and the others who then came to see him, that did he not think that he should go to wise and just gods, and to men that had departed this life, and who were better than those who were then living upon the earth, it would be wrong in him not to be troubled at death; "but know assuredly," says he, "that I hope I am now going to good men, though this I would not take upon me peremptorily to assert: but that I shall go to the gods, lords that are absolutely good, this, if I can affirm any thing of this kind, I would certainly affirm. And for this reason I do not take it ill that I am to die, as otherwise I should do; but am in good hope that there is something remaining for those that are dead, and that (as it hath been said of old) it will then be much better for good than for bad men." He then proposes to offer reasons, why a man that had all his life applied himself to philosophy should expect death with confidence, and should entertain good hope that he should obtain the best of good things after his departure out of this life (*p*).

In other parts of that dialogue Socrates says excellent things concerning the happiness to be enjoyed in a future state. But then he seems to regard this as the special privilege of those who having an earnest thirst after knowledge addicted themselves to the study of philosophy. He talks of the soul's going at his departure hence, "into a place like itself, noble, pure, invisible, to a wise and good God, whither," says he, "if it pleases God, my soul shall soon go (*q*)."

And again, that "the soul which gives itself up to the study of wisdom and philosophy, and lives abstracted from the body, goes at death to that which is like

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(*p*) Plato *Oper.* p. 377. H. 378. A, B. edit. Lugd.

(*q*) *Ibid.* p. 385. G. edit. Lugd.

itself, divine, immortal, wise, to which when it arrives, it shall be happy, freed from error, ignorance, fears, disorderly loves, ἀγρίων ἡρώτων, and other human evils, and lives, as is said of the initiated, the rest of its life with the gods (r).” He adds, that they who only minded the body and its appetites and pleasures, having something in them ponderous and earthy, shall after their departure out of the body be drawn down to the earth, and hover about the sepulchres, being punished for their former ill-spent life, τὴν δίκην τίνεσαι τῆς προτέρας τροφῆς, till having still a hankering after corporeal nature they enter again into bodies, suited to their former manners: those who were wholly given to their belly and to intemperance, enter in the bodies of asses and other like beasts; the tyrannical, injurious, and rapacious in the bodies of wolves, hawks, kites, &c. (s); but that those of them are the happiest and go to the best place, who diligently practise the popular and civil virtue, which is called temperance and justice, having acquired it by custom and exercise, without philosophy and intellect. And to the question, how are these the happiest? Socrates answers, that “they go into the bodies of animals of a mild and social kind, and who have some sort of polity among them, such as bees, ants, &c. or into human bodies, of a like kind with their own, and so become men of moderation and sobriety. But that no man is allowed to be admitted to the fellowship of the gods, but he that being a lover of knowledge, hath applied himself to philosophy, and departed hence altogether pure (t).” He afterwards, in the conclusion of that discourse, says, that “they who live holy and excellent lives,” being freed from these earthly

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(r) Plato Oper. p. 386. A.

(s) Ibid. p. 386. B, C, D.

(t) Ibid. p. 386, E, F.

places as from prisons, ascend to a pure region above the earth, where they dwell: and those of them who were sufficiently purged by philosophy live all their time without bodies, and ascend to still more beautiful habitations (*u*)."

It appears then from this account of Socrates's sentiments, that he had very high ideas of the happiness which, he supposed, would be provided after death for some souls, especially the souls of those who had applied themselves to the study of wisdom and philosophy, who went immediately to the gods: yet with respect to the bulk of mankind, whether good or bad, he held the transmigration of souls, with this only difference, that bad and vicious men, after having hovered a while disconsolate about the sepulchres, pass into the bodies of animals of like dispositions with their own, wolves, kites, foxes, asses, &c. But the common sort of good men, who had exercised justice and temperance, go into the bodies of animals of a more gentle and civil kind, or returned into human bodies, such as they had before. A mighty encouragement this to the practice of virtue, that they who applied themselves to it were to have the privilege of animating the bodies of ants or bees, and at the utmost they were to return to the labours and offices of this mortal life: and on the other hand, the wicked had nothing else to fear, but the being thrust into the bodies of animals suited to their own natures, and in which they might have it in their power to gratify their darling lusts and appetites under another form.

Cicero gives a summary account of Socrates's doctrine in the *Phædo*, in which he does not confine himself to his expressions, but represents the general sense and design of them to this purpose: That when the souls of men de-

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(*u*) Plato *Oper.* p. 400.

part out of their bodies, they go two different ways: to those who being wholly abandoned to their corrupt lusts and appetites, have contaminated themselves with vices, whether of a public or private nature, a devious road is appointed, secluded from the council of the gods: but to them who have preserved themselves chaste and uncorrupt, free from the contagion of their bodies, and who in human bodies have imitated the life of the gods, an easy way lies open for returning to those from whom they came (v).

Socrates, in the apology he makes to his judges, expresses his hope that it would be better for him that he was put to death: and he tells them, that this one thing ought to be considered as a certain truth, that no evil can befall a good man, whether living or dying, nor shall his affairs be ever neglected by the gods. Cicero renders it thus; "Id unum cogitare verum esse, nec cuiquam bono mali quicquam evenire posse, nec vivo nec mortuo: nec unquam ejus res à diis immortalibus negligentur (x)." And this general assertion seems to be the utmost that a man can attain to, by the mere light of reason and philosophy, without the assistance of divine revelation.

What has been said of Socrates may in a great measure

(v) "Ita enim censebat, itaque disseruit: duas esse vias, duplicesque cursus animorum è corpore excedentium. Nam qui se humanis vitiis contaminavissent, et se totos libidinibus dedissent, quibus excæcati, vel domesticis vitiis atque flagitiis se inquinavissent, vel republicâ violandâ fraudes inexpiabiles concepissent, his devium quoddam iter esse, seclusum a concilio deorum; qui autem se integros castosque servavissent, quibusque esset minima cum corporibus contagio, seseque ab his semper sevocavissent, essentque in corporibus humanis vitam imitati deorum, his ad illos a quibus essent profecti, reditum facilem patere." Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 30.

(x) Ibid. cap. 41.



be applied to Plato the most eminent of his disciples: the dialogues in which he introduces Socrates discoursing concerning the immortality of the soul and a future state, are generally and I think justly regarded, as containing not only Socrates's sentiments but his own. The same doctrine in this respect runs through all Plato's works, under whatsoever class we range them, whether as esoteric or exoteric. The antients as well as moderns have generally entertained this notion of them. Cicero says, that Plato seems to have designed to convince others of the immortality of the soul by the reasons which he has offered: but that, however this might be, he seems certainly to have been persuaded of it himself. "*Tot rationes attulit, ut velle cæteris, sibi certè persuasisse videatur (y).*" He often speaks of a future state of rewards and punishments in the gross popular sense, and talks of the judges in Hades, of Tartarus and Styx, Cocytus, Acheron and Pyriphlegethon. So he does in his *Georgias*, in his tenth *Republic*, and even in his *Phædo*. This he did in a way of accommodation to the popular notions. He generally introduces them as *μύθοι*, fables, i. e. fabulous representations and traditions; and it appears from other passages in his works, that he did not himself believe them in the literal sense: but it does not follow from this, that therefore he did not believe future rewards or punishments. There are some passages which seem to shew that he believed them in a more refined sense. In his *Theætetus* having observed, that we should use our utmost endeavours to be as like God as possible; and that this likeness to God consists in being just and holy, together with prudence; and that nothing is more like God than he that is the justest among men, he adds, "if we should say, that as to bad men, if they

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(y) *Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 21.*

be not freed from their depravity in this life, that place which is pure from evil will not receive them when they die, and that they shall carry with them the similitude of their former life and manners; and being evil themselves shall be associated to them that are evil: the crafty and malicious when they hear these things will treat them as the ravings of mad men (z)." Plato's sentiments here are noble, but he intimates that they met with little credit or regard. A learned author, who is not very favourable to that philosopher, reckons the Theætetus from whence this passage is taken among his Esoterics, which are supposed to contain his real opinions. The same doctrine is taught in his tenth Republic, which the same author supposes to be of the popular and exoteric kind. He there introduces Socrates as saying; "in the first place you will grant me this, that it is not concealed from the gods, what sort of a man any one is, whether just or unjust; and if this be not concealed from them, the one is beloved of God, or of the gods [for the word *θεοφιλής*, there used may be translated either way, as he had spoken of the gods just before] the other hated of God or of the gods, *θεομισῆς*. And shall we not acknowledge that to him that is beloved of God, whatsoever things are done by the gods are the best that can be, except some necessary evil come upon him from a sin he was formerly guilty of? It must therefore be supposed concerning the just man, that if he be in poverty or sickness, or under any of those things which are accounted evils, these things shall in the issue be for good, either when he is living or after he is dead. For that man shall never be neglected by the gods, who earnestly desires to become just; and applying himself to the practice of virtue, endeavours to be made like to God as far as is pos-

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(z) Plato Oper. p. 128. G. 129. A. edit. Lugd.

sible for a man to be:" he adds, "that the contrary of all this must be concluded concerning the unjust man." He afterwards observes, that bad men, when once they are found out to be so, for they may conceal their vices for a while, incur the contempt and hatred of their fellow-citizens, and are exposed to many calamities in this life: and on the other hand, he takes notice of the "rewards and gifts which are conferred upon the just man, whilst he is yet alive, both by gods and men, besides those good things which are contained in righteousness or virtue itself." He adds, that "these, viz. the punishments of the wicked, and rewards of good men in this life which he had mentioned, are nothing either in number or greatness to those which remain for each of them after death (a)." This is a remarkable passage, in which he asserts rewards for good men, and punishments for bad, both in this life and after death, distinct from what are contained in the nature of virtue and vice itself, and supposes the rewards and punishments of another life to be much greater than any in this. He then goes on to relate the famous story of Erces Armenius, who having fallen in battle, and continued among the dead several days, on the twelfth day after, when they were going to bury him, revived, and gave an account of the things he had seen in the other world, the rewards bestowed upon good men, and the punishments inflicted on the wicked. But it is to be observed that in the account Plato gives of this, he makes both the one and the other, except a few who were extremely wicked and incorrigible, to return again after a certain time into other bodies of men

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(a) Ταῦτα τοίνυν ἔδεν ἔσι πλῆθει ἐδὲ μεγέθει πρὸς ἐπεῖνα ἃ τελευτήσαν-  
τα ἑκάτερον περιμένει. Plat. Oper. p. 519. E. F.

or beasts, such as were suitable to them, or which they themselves should chuse (b).

To this may be added what he saith at the latter end of his tenth book of laws, where he observes, that the soul being appointed sometimes to one body, sometimes to another, runs through all kinds of transmigrations: and the only thing that remains for him to do who orders these matters as it were by lot, is to remove those of better manners to a better place, those of worse manners to a worse, as is proper for every one, that each may receive that portion which is most suitable to him (c). He afterwards adds, that according to the different qualities of men's souls, and their actions, they have different abodes assigned them, and undergo divers changes according to the law and order of fate; that "those who have been guilty of smaller sins do not sink so deep, but wander about near the surface of the region; but they that have sinned more frequently and more heinously, shall fall into the depth, and into those lower places which are called Hades, and by other names of the like kind, which, both the living, and they that have departed out of their bodies, are afraid and dream of (d)." And after some other things to the same purpose, he adds, "this, O young man, who thinkest the gods take no notice of thee, this is the judgment of the gods who dwell in heaven; that he that is bad should go to the souls which are bad, and he that is better to better souls both in this life and at death. Wherefore neither do thou, nor let any other, expect to be so lucky as to escape this judgment of the gods. For thou shalt never be neglected or pass unnoticed, neither if thou shouldst be so small as to hide thyself in the lowest

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(b) Plat. Oper. p. 521.

(c) Ibid. p. 672. A.

(d) Ibid. D.



part of the earth, nor if thou shouldest take thy flight as high as heaven, but shalt suffer a suitable punishment, either whilst thou remainest here, or when thou goest to Hades, or art transported to some wilder and more horrid place (*d*)."

I think from the passages which have been produced, to which others might be added, it sufficiently appears that Plato, as well as his master Socrates, taught the immortality of the soul, and a state of future rewards and punishments. But it is to be observed that neither of them pretended to have found this out merely by their own reason, but frequently represent it as a matter of very antient tradition, which they endeavoured to support and improve. They both of them seem to have believed in general that there would be a difference made in a future state between good and bad men, and that the one should be in a greater or less degree rewarded, and the other punished. But they greatly weakened and obscured that doctrine by mixing with it that of the transmigration of souls and other fictions, as well as by sometimes talking very waveringly and uncertainly about it. And it is remarkable, that though there were several sects of philosophers, which professed to derive their original from Socrates, scarce any of them taught the immortality of the soul as the doctrine of their schools, except Plato and his disciples, and many even of these treated it as absolutely uncertain.

That great man Cicero was a mighty admirer of Plato, and may be justly reckoned among the most eminent of

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(e) Οὐ γὰρ ἀμεληθήσῃ ποτὲ ὑπ' αὐτῆς [Δίκης] ἔχ' ἔτι σμικρὸς ὢν δύσῃ κατὰ τὸ τῆς γῆς βάθος. εἰδὲ ὑψηλὸς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν ἔρανον ἀναπλήσῃ, τίσεις δὲ αὐτῶν τὴν προσήκουσαν τιμωρίαν, εἴτ' ἐνθάδε μένων, εἴτε καὶ ἐν ἄλλῃ διαπορευθεὶς εἴτε καὶ τετῶν εἰς ἀγριώτερον ἢ τε διακομιθεὶς τόπον. Plato Oper. 672. F.

those philosophers, who argued for the immortality of the soul. For though, according to the custom of the new academy, of which sect he was, he disputed pro and con upon every subject, yet it appears from several passages in his works, that his judgment strongly inclined him to that opinion (*e*), as at least more probable than the contrary. He does not merely mention this in some single detached passages, but he argues the matter at large, in one of the finest pieces antiquity has left us. He argues from the nature of the soul, and its uncompounded and indivisible essence, of a quite different kind from these common elementary natures, from its wonderful powers and faculties, which have something divine in them, and incompatible with sluggish matter, from the ardent thirst after immortality natural to the human mind, but which is most conspicuous in the most exalted souls, and from some other topics, which the reader may see in the first book of his *Tusculan Disputations*. He speaks to the same purpose in his *Cato Major*, and in his *Somnium Scipionis*, and on several other occasions. It is true, there are two or three passages in his epistles to his friends, in which he seems to express himself in a different strain. In an epistle to Torquatus, he comforts himself with this thought: "Whilst I shall exist, I shall not

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(*e*) The learned Dr. Middleton, in his *Life of Cicero*, observes, that "he held the immortality of the soul, and its separate existence after death, in a state of happiness or misery." But in the latter part of this assertion, that ingenious writer seems to be mistaken: for Cicero did not hold that any separate soul was in a state of misery after death. His whole argument in the first book of his *Tusculan Disputations* turns upon this point, that either the soul shall be extinguished at death; or if it survives, which is what he endeavours to prove, it shall be happy. Future misery and torments he entirely rejects. But this shall be considered more particularly afterwards.

be troubled at any thing, since I have no fault to charge myself with; and if I shall not exist, I shall be deprived of all sense.”—“*Nec enim dum ero, angar ulla re; cùm omni caream culpâ; et si non ero, sensu omni carebo(f).*” In another epistle to the same Torquatus, he tells him, that “if he was called to depart out of this life, he should not be snatched from that republic he would desire to continue in, especially since he should then be without any sense.”—“*Deinde quod mihi ad consolandum commune tecum est, si jam vocer ad exitum vitæ, non ab eâ republicâ avellar quâ carendum esse doleam, præsertim cum id sine ullo sensu sit futurum(g).*” And in an epistle to L. Mescinius, he says, death ought to be despised, or even wished for, because it will be void of all sense. “*Propterea quòd nullum sensum esset habitura.*” And in an epistle to Toranius, he gives it as a reason for bearing with moderation whatsoever should happen, that death is the end of all things. “*Una ratio videtur, quicquid evenierit ferre moderatè, præsertim cum omnium rerum mors sit extremum(h).*” But I think it would be carrying it too far to conclude, from a few short hints thrown out occasionally in letters written in haste, that Cicero’s real opinion was that the soul died with the body, when he had so often given his reasons for the contrary, in books where he professedly treats on that subject. The persons he writ to were probably Epicureans; such was Torquatus; and the same may be supposed of the rest, it being then the fashionable opinion among the gentlemen of Rome. The letters were written in a political way, relating to the then melancholy state of the republic, and it would have been absurd, whatever Cicero’s private opinion

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(f) Cic. Epist. lib. vi. epist. 3.

(g) Ibid. lib. vi. epist. 4.

(h) Ibid. lib. vi. epist. 21.

might have been, to have offered consolations to Epicureans, drawn from the hope of a happy existence after death. But though I think it cannot be absolutely concluded from those passages that Cicero was in his real sentiments against the immortality of the soul, yet it is not probable that he would have expressed himself in the manner he has done in those letters, if he had been uniform and steady in the belief of it. It may well be granted, that he had doubts in his mind concerning it, and therefore in the uncertainty he was under expressed himself differently at different times.

There is another philosopher of great note, whom I shall here mention, though he lived after Christianity had made some progress in the world, and therefore does not come so properly under our present consideration; and that is Plutarch, who was extremely well versed in the writings of the philosophers who had flourished before his time. He not only represents the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and a future state as a matter of antient tradition, and which was countenanced by the laws, from which we ought not to recede (*i*), but he produces reasons for it, especially in his excellent treatise *De Serâ Numinis vindictâ*. He gives it as the sum of his discourse, that the Deity exerciseth an inspection over us, and distributeth to us according to our deserts: and that from thence it follows, that souls are altogether incorruptible and immortal, or that they remain for some time after death. He adds, that it would suppose God to be meanly and idly employed in concerning himself so much about us, if we had nothing divine within, or which resembleth his own perfections, nothing that is stable and firm, but were only like leaves, which, as Homer

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(*i*) Plut. *Consol. ad uxorem*, Oper. tom. II. p. 612. edit. Xyl.



speaks, wither and fall in a short time. And he represents it as absurd to imagine that souls are made only to blossom and flourish for a day in a tender and delicate body of flesh, and then to be immediately extinguished on every slight occasion (*k*). He argues farther, that if the deceased vanish like clouds or smoke, the oracle of Apollo would never have appointed propitiations to be made for the dead, and honours to be rendered to them. And he declares, that the same reasons confirm the providence of God, and the permanency of the human soul; and that the one of these cannot be maintained, if the other be denied. Ἐἰς ἕτερον λόγον δὲ ὁ τῶν θεῶν τὴν πρόνοιαν ἅμα καὶ τὴν διαμονὴν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς βεβαιῶν, καὶ θάτερον ἐκ ἑστίν ἀπολιπεῖν ἀναιρῶντα θάτερον (*l*). He adds, "Now then, since the soul existeth after death, it is probable that it partakes both of rewards and punishments: for in this life the soul is in a state of conflict, like a wrestler, but when it has finished its conflict, it receives suitable retributions." Yet in what follows, he intimates that these things were not commonly believed. And, indeed, he himself is far from being consistent and uniform on this head: for though the passages now produced from him have a fair aspect, there are other passages in his works which have a contrary appearance, as I shall have occasion to shew.

(*k*) Plut. Consol. ad uxorem, Oper. tom. II. p. 560. B, C.

(*l*) Plut. de Serâ Numinis Vind. Oper. tom. II, p. 560. D, F. edit. Xyl.

## CHAPTER V.

Those of the antient philosophers who argued for the immortality of the soul, placed it on wrong foundations, and mixed things with it which weakened the belief of it. Some of them asserted, that the soul is immortal, as being a portion of the Divine Essence. They universally held the pre-existence of the human soul, and laid the chief stress upon this for proving its immortality. Their doctrine of the transmigration of souls was a great corruption of the true doctrine of a future state. Those who said the highest things of future happiness, considered it as confined chiefly to persons of eminence, or to those of philosophical minds, and afforded small encouragement to the common kind of pious and virtuous persons. The rewards of Elysium were but temporary, and of a short duration: and even the happiness of those privileged souls, who were supposed to be admitted not merely into Elysium, but into heaven, was not everlasting in the strict and proper sense. The Gospel doctrine of eternal life to all good and righteous persons was not taught by the antient Pagan philosophers.

**H**AVING endeavoured to lay before the reader the sentiments of those Pagan philosophers, who are generally looked upon as having been the ablest asserters of the immortality of the soul and a future state, I shall now make some observations, by which it may appear how far their instructions were to be depended upon, and were of real service to mankind, with regard to this important article.

And the first thing I would observe is, that the best of those philosophers placed it on wrong foundations, or mixed things with it, which tended greatly to weaken the belief or defeat the influence of it. This appears partly from what has been already observed. Some of them, as the Pythagoreans, argued for the soul's immortality, because the divine nature from which it is taken, and of which it is a detached part or portion immersed in a human body, is immortal. This certainly was putting it on a false foundation, and building it upon a notion absurd in itself, and which, if pur-

sued to its just consequences, tends to the subversion of all religion, by confounding God and the creature, and making them both of the same nature and essence. A celebrated author has argued, from the notion which the Pythagoreans and many other antient philosophers had of the soul's being a part of God, that they did not and could not really believe a future state of rewards and punishments. And, indeed, it seems to be a natural consequence of that notion, that at least there could not be future punishments. But men do not always see and acknowledge the consequences of their own principles. And they might as reasonably suppose this notion to be reconcileable to future rewards and punishments, as to present ones. For since they supposed, that the soul, though it be a part of God, is capable in this life of being both rewarded and punished; and that whilst it is here in this body, it is subject to vice, ignorance, and a variety of evils (*m*); I see no reason why it might not be supposed to be also obnoxious to punishments in a future state: for the absurdity is equal in the one case as in the other.

The notion of the soul's being a portion of the Divine Essence was common to other philosophers, as well as the Pythagoreans. It has been already shewn, that this was the opinion of the Stoics, though they seem not to have argued the soul's immortality from it. What were Plato's sentiments on this head the learned are not agreed. Plutarch, in his Platonic questions, gives it as Plato's opinion, that "the soul, being partaker of understanding, reason, and harmony, is not the work of God only, but also a part of him; and is

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(*m*) The absurdity of this is well exposed by Velleius the Epicurean, in Cicero's first book *De Nat. Deor.* cap. xi. p. 28. edit. Davis.

not made by him, but from him, and out of him." "Οὐκ ἔργον ἔστι τῷ θεῷ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μέρεσιν, ἐδ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γέγονεν (n). But the same author seems elsewhere to represent Plato's opinion otherwise. Speaking of the rational soul, he gives it as the opinion of Pythagoras and Plato, that "it is immortal, and that it is not God, but the work of the eternal God." Καὶ γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν ὁ θεὸς ἀλλ' ἔργον τῷ αἰδίῳ θεῷ ὑπαρχειν. And it is observable that he had declared a few lines before, that Pythagoras and Plato held that the human soul is immortal; because "when it departs out of the body, it recedes to the soul of the universe, to that which is of the same kind or nature with it." Πρὸς τὸ ὁμογενές. It is not easy to reconcile these things. But it is proper to observe, that the soul of the world was not the absolutely Supreme God

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(n) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1001. Edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620. A very able and learned writer, who is a zealous advocate for the antient philosophers, observes, "That the Egyptians imagined the soul to be a part or portion of God himself, a section of God's substance, which always did and always must exist. And that this was the philosophic notion from the time of Pythagoras among the Greeks;" and that "he made the soul to be a part of the τὸ ἐν." See Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, chap. xiv. p. 392. 394. By representing it as the philosophic notion from the time of Pythagoras among the Greeks, he seems to suppose that it was the doctrine of Plato himself. And if this be a true representation, it is a remarkable instance to shew how much philosophers of the greatest abilities were mistaken in points of high consequence. Nor can I see how this ingenious author could justly affirm, as he has done, that in what relates to the Deity, "Those who followed the mere light of nature (by whom he particularly understands the philosophers) seem to be very clear, and made use of the faculties God had given them to great and good purposes;" and that "they closely pursued truth in what they discerned about the Governor of the universe." Ibid. p. 362. 379.



in the Platonic, though it was so in the Stoic system (*o*). Plotinus represents the human soul, as *ὑποσίδης*, of the same species with the mundane soul, which is his third hypostasis, and which he calls the eldest sister of our human souls (*p*). And yet he does not seem to have supposed the human soul to be in the strictest sense a part of that God whom he looked upon to be absolutely supreme. But Dr. Cudworth is very right in the censure he has passed upon it, that "as this savours highly of philosophic pride and arrogance, to think so magnificently of themselves, and to equalize in a manner their own souls with that mundane soul, so was it a monstrous degradation of the third hypostasis of their trinity:" and which according to that learned writer, they supposed to be of the same nature, though inferior to the first. He adds, that "they did doubtless therein designedly lay a foundation for their polytheism and

(*o*) Plato represents the Supreme God. the τὸ ἀγαθόν, as of a most singular and transcendent nature, not to be named or comprehended. There is a remarkable passage at the latter end of his sixth republic, the purport of which is this, That "as the sun not only gives the power of being seen to the things which are seen, but is also the cause of their generation, growth, and nutrition, but is not the generation itself; in like manner, God with respect to the things that are known, is not only the cause of their being known, but also of their essence and existence, yet is not that essence, but is above essence in dignity and power\*." Here he seems plainly to distinguish the Supreme God from the world and all things in it. He supposes him to be the author and cause of knowledge, wisdom, truth, and good, of the essence and existence of every thing, but that his essence is entirely distinct from that of every thing.

(*p*) Plotin. Ennead. v. lib. i. cap. 2.

\* Platon. Opera, p. 479. C. edit. Lugd.

creature-worship, for their cosmolatry, astrolatry, and dæmonolatry (*q*).”

But not to insist longer upon this, certain it is, that those philosophers who argued for the immortality of the soul universally held its pre-existence before it animated the human body, and laid the stress of the argument for its eternal existence after its departure from the body, upon its existence from times immemorial, or even from everlasting before its entrance into it. This is what the very learned writer last mentioned affirms concerning all the antient asserters of the soul’s immortality. That “they held that it was not generated or made out of nothing, for then it might return to nothing. And therefore they commonly began with proving its pre-existence, proceeding thence to prove its permanency after death (*r*).” This is the method used by Socrates in Plato’s *Phædo*. He first endeavours to prove, that the soul existed before its entrance into the body, and that the knowledge we now have, is only a reminiscence of that which we had in the pre-existent state, and then proceeds to prove that it shall exist after its being separated from it (*s*). Thus they argued for the soul’s immortality upon a principle which it was impossible for them to prove, and which really weakened the doctrine they intended to establish. Hence it was, that they who thought there was no reason to believe that the soul had an existence before it animated the human body, would not allow it survived the body: for it was, as Cicero represents it, “a principle universally acknowledged, that whatever is born and hath a beginning, must also have an end.” And upon this foundation it was, that the famous Stoic Panætius, who was other-

(*q*) Cudworth’s *Intel. Syst.* p. 593.

(*r*) *Ibid.* p. 38, 39. 2d edit.

(*s*) Plato *Oper.* p. 384, 385. edit. Lugd.

wise a great admirer of Plato, denied the soul's immortality. "Vult enim," says Cicero, speaking of Panætius, "quod nemo negat, quicquid natum sit interire: nasci autem animos, quod declarat eorum similitudo, qui procreantur, quæ etiam in ingeniis, non solùm in corporibus, appareat (*t*)."  
Cicero himself, in arguing for the immortality of the soul, asserts its pre-existence from eternity. There is a remarkable passage to this purpose in his book *de Consolatione*, quoted by himself in the first book of his *Tusculan Disputations*. He there says, that "the soul has not its original from the earth; for that it has nothing in it mixed or compounded, or which seems to be sprung or formed out of the earth, nothing watery, or airy, or fiery in its constitution: for in these natures there is nothing which hath the notion of memory and understanding, which can both retain the things which are past, and look forward to things future, and comprehend the present: which alone are divine: nor can it ever be found from whence these things should come to man but from God." I think this is very justly argued: but afterwards he carries it farther: "Whatsoever thing is in us," says he, "which perceives, which understands, which lives, which has a force and vigour of its own, it is celestial and divine; and for that reason must of necessity be eternal." "Ita quicquid est istud quod sentit, quod sapit, quod vivit, quod viget, cœleste ac divinum est, ob eamque rem æternum sit necesse est (*u*)."  
This looks as if Cicero thought that the human soul was really and properly a part of the divine essence. But I think this does not necessarily follow. It may perhaps signify no more, than that he calls the soul divine, to signify its near cognation to the Divine

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(*t*) *Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 32. edit. Davis.*

(*u*) *Ibid. cap. 27. p. 67. edit. Davis.*

Nature, and the resemblance it bears to it, and in opposition to things which are of an earthly and elementary nature. In the words immediately preceding these last mentioned, he expresses himself thus; “*Singularis est igitur quædam natura atque vis animi, sejuncta ab his usitatis notisque naturis.*” Where he intimates that the soul is of a singular nature and force, different from those known and common natures, that is, from earthly and corporeal things, of which he had been speaking before: and in contradistinction to which he calls it divine. And he introduces this whole passage, with observing, that besides the four elements of the material world, there is a fifth nature, which was first taught by Aristotle, which belongs to the gods and human souls; and intimates that this was the opinion which he himself followed in the quotation produced from his book *de Consolatione*. “*Sin autem est quinta quædam natura ab Aristotele inducta primùm, hæc et deorum est et animorum. Hanc nos sententiam secuti his ipsis verbis in Consolatione hæc expressimus.*” If Cicero had thought that Aristotle intended by the fifth nature the divine essence properly so called, it could not have been said, that he was the first that introduced it, for Pythagoras had taught it before: it is therefore probably to be understood of a nature distinct both from these lower elementary natures, and from the essence of the Supreme Being, though near a-kin to it and perfectly like it; of which both the gods, i. e. the inferior deities, and human souls were partakers. And this also seems to be plainly intimated in the words with which he concludes that fragment. “*Nec verò Deus ipse, qui intelligitur à nobis alio modo intelligi potest, nisi mens soluta quædam et libera, segregata ab omni concretionem mortali omnia sentiens et movens, ipsaque prædita motu sempiterna.*” Where immediately after having said, that the soul is a celestial and divine thing, and must for that reason be eternal; he adds, that “God himself, as far as he is appre-



hended by us, can be conceived of no otherwise, than as a mind disengaged from all mortal concretion or mixture, perceiving and moving all things, and itself endued with an eternal motion." Here he seems plainly to distinguish God himself, "*Deus ipse*," in the highest sense, from human souls, which yet he supposes to be of a similar and congenial nature; and a little before he represents vital activity, understanding, invention, and memory, as divine things or qualities, on the account of which the soul might be called divine, as he chuses to express it, or, as Euripides ventures to call it, a god; where he seems to look upon the calling the soul a god to be a daring manner of expression even in a poet. "*Quæ autem divina? vigere, sapere, invenire, meminisse. Ergo quidem animus, qui (ut ego dico divinus) est ut Euripides audet dicere Deus (x).*" And elsewhere having represented the soul as much superior to the brute animals, and decerped from the divine mind, he saith, "it can be compared with no other but with God himself, if it be lawful to say so." "*Humanus autem animus, decerptus ex mente divinâ, cum alio nullo nisi cum ipso Deo (in hoc fas est dicta) comparari potest (y).*"

(x) He there adds, that if God be either air or fire, "*anima aut ignis*," the soul of man is the same: for as that celestial nature is free from earth and moisture, so the soul of man is free from both these: and that if there be a fifth nature, it is common both to gods and men. *Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 26. p. 65, 66. edit. Davis.*

(y) *Tuscul. Disput. lib. v. cap. 13. p. 371. edit. Davis.* Plato expresses himself after the same manner. In his tenth Republic, he talks of a man's endeavouring, by applying himself to the practice of virtue, "to be made like to God, as far as it is possible for men to be\*." And in his *Philebus*, he talks of taking "our

\* Plato *Oper. p. 518. C. edit. Lugd.* See also his *Theætetus*, *ibid. p. 128. F.*

• But if we should allow that it was not Cicero's opinion that the human soul is in the strictest and properest sense a part of God, yet he certainly supposed that its nature is of the same kind, and is like his naturally and necessarily eternal. Thus he asserts in the passage above cited: "Celeste ac divinum est, ob eamque rem æternum sit necesse est." And in the same discourse he produces a passage from Plato's *Phædrus*, which he seems highly to approve; and which he had also cited in his sixth book *de Republica*. Plato begins with observing, that every soul is immortal, *πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος*. And the argument he uses to prove it is elegantly translated by Cicero. It is to this purpose: that "that which always moves is eternal: that which is moved by another must come to an end of motion, and consequently of life: but that which moves itself will never cease to move, because it is never deserted by itself. Moreover it is the fountain and principle of motion to all other things which are moved. And that which is the principle can have no original or beginning: for from it all things arise, but it cannot arise from any other. And if it never had a beginning, it shall never have an end. Since therefore it is manifest that that is eternal which has the principle of motion within itself, who will deny that this nature belongs to souls (z)?" He concludes with saying, that "this is the proper nature and force of the soul. And

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manners from God, as far as it is possible for man to partake of God." *καθ' ὅσον δυνατόν θεῷ ἀνθρώπου μετασχεῖν.*

(z) Plutarch. *de Placit. Philos.* lib. iv. cap. 2. says, that Thales was the first who taught that the soul is in a perpetual motion, and that this motion proceeds from itself. *φύσιν ἀεικίνητον καὶ αὐτοκίνητον*. This is an argument often made use of by those of the ancients who pleaded for the immortality of the soul. See Dr. Davis's note on *Tuscul. Disput.* lib. i. cap. 23. p. 53.

since it is the only thing which always moves itself, it never had a beginning, but is eternal." "Nam hæc est propria natura animi atque vis: quæ si est una ex omnibus quæ se ipsa semper moveat, neque certè nata est, et æterna est." Plato has it thus, ἐξ ἀναγκῆς ἀγεννητὸν τε καὶ ἀθνητὸν πνεῦμα ἂν εἴη, "of necessity the soul must be an ungenerated and immortal thing (a)."

Cicero highly commends this as both elegantly and acutely argued, and afterwards sums it up himself thus: "The soul perceives that it moves, and at the same time perceives that it moves not by a foreign force, but by its own; and it can never happen that it should be deserted by itself: from whence it follows, that it must be eternal." "Sentit igitur animus se moveri, quod cum sentit illud una sentit, se vi suâ non alienâ moveri, nec accidere posse ut ipsa unquam à se deseratur: ex quo efficitur æternitas (b)." This way of arguing so much admired by Cicero might be made use of to prove the eternal existence of the one self-existent independent Being, the first cause of all things, and the principle and original of all motion. But when applied to the human soul, if it proved any thing, would prove that it is self-originate, independent, and necessarily eternal by the force of its own nature. So that if it be not strictly of the same essence with the supreme God, it is of a nature perfectly like his, underived, and which existed of itself from everlasting, and continueth always to exist by its own force, and can never be destroyed or cease to exist (c). Hence it was that some of the

(a) Plato in *Phædro*, Opera, p. 344. D, E. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(b) Cic. *Tuscul. Disput.* l. i. cap. 23. p. 52. et seq. edit. Davis.

(c) This seems to be the course of Plato's argument for the immortality of the soul, as urged by Plato in his *Phædrus*, and after him by Cicero. And yet the same Plato in his *Timæus*

antient fathers found fault with the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul as taught by the Heathen philosophers; because they thought it tended to prove that the soul continued to exist by a necessity of nature, and was independent on God. Arnobius particularly charges them with holding, that the soul was equally immortal with God himself; which, he thought, had a tendency to take away the dread of the supreme power, and of a future judgment and punishment; and thereby to encourage men to all manner of wickedness, and the licentious indulgence of their lusts and appetites. "*Quid enim,*" says he, "*prohibebit quo minus hæc faciat? metus supremæ potestatis, judiciumque divinum? Et qui poterit territari formidinis alicujus horrore, cui fuerat persuasam, tam se esse immortalem, quam ipsum Deum primum? nec ab eo judicari quicquam de se posse: cum sit una immortalitas in utroque, nec in alterius altera conditionis possit æqualitate vexari.*"

It has been shewn that the principal arguments made use of by the antient Pagan philosophers to prove the immortality of the soul placed it on wrong foundations. I shall not enter on a particular consideration of the other arguments offered by them in proof of that important article. One would have expected to have met with some solid and satisfactory reasonings on this subject in Plato's *Phædo*, a treatise highly celebrated by antiquity, and the professed design of which is to prove the immortality of the soul. And it may reasonably be supposed, that Plato has there laid together, and put into the mouth of Socrates, whatever he judged to be of the greatest force, whether it had been

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makes the immortality of the secondary gods to depend not merely upon their own nature, but upon the will of the supreme God. And surely this equally holds concerning human souls.



advanced by Socrates, or was of his own invention. But I am sorry to observe, that, abstracting from the fine manner of carrying on that dialogue, there is not much strength of argument even in those things on which he seems to lay the greatest stress: and that some of them are obscure and trifling, and what one would not have expected from so great a man (*d*). Socrates and Plato seem to be among the first that undertook to prove this point in a way of reason and argument. But, as was before observed, they both represent it as having been transmitted by antient traditions, to which it was just to give credit as being of a divine original.

Another remarkable instance, in which those of the

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(*d*) The reader that would see a summary of Socrates's arguments for the immortality of the soul, as represented in Plato's *Phædo*, may consult the account given of them by Dr. Campbell in his *Necessity of Revelation*, sect. 3. p. 100. et seq. upon all which that learned writer observes, that "Socrates by no means arrived at this truth, in pursuing any series of ideas or notions that could arise in one's mind from the nature and relation of things. He is much like a man who has some way or other picked up a truth, but can give no account of it, but casts abroad to find out something to justify his opinion in the best manner he can, without advancing any thing to the purpose." Ibid. p. 107. Indeed some of the latter Platonists and Pythagoreans who lived after life and immortality was brought into the most clear and open light by the Gospel, seem to have managed the argument with much greater advantage than Plato himself. This may be particularly observed concerning Plotinus; and indeed this great article seems then to have been more generally acknowledged among the philosophers, than it was before. And yet Porphyry, one of the most learned of them, and a great admirer of Plotinus, observes, that the reasons whereby the philosophers endeavoured to demonstrate the immortality of the soul were easy to be overthrown. Ap. Euseb. *Præpar. Evangel.* lib. xiv. cap. 10. p. 741. C.

antients who professed to believe the immortality of the soul, and a state of future rewards and punishments, greatly weakened and corrupted that doctrine, relates to the notion they universally held of the transmigration of souls. This has been already mentioned; but it is proper to take some further notice of it in this place.

As they maintained the pre-existence of human souls before their entrance into their present bodies, so also that they transmigrated after their departure out of these bodies, from one body to another. These notions were looked upon as having a near connexion; and those that held the former maintained the latter too. And indeed they who believed that their souls had existed long before they animated their present bodies, would find no difficulty in conceiving that after quitting these bodies they passed into others. And what might contribute to the general reception and propagation of this notion, both among the more learned and the vulgar, was, that they believed, upon the credit of a very antient tradition, that the soul did not die with the body, and that it survived in a future state, and yet could not well conceive how it could live and subsist without animating some body: this led them to suppose that, when it was dislodged from one body, it animated another. And as they believed that the inferior animals had souls as well as men, they might suppose that human souls might transmigrate into the bodies of those animals (*e*).

But whencesoever this notion of the transmigration of souls had its rise, it spread very generally among the nations, and was embraced not only by the vulgar, but by the

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(*e*) Some suppose that the doctrine of transmigration might have been owing to an abuse or perversion of an antient tradition concerning the resurrection of the body: concerning which see below, chap. viii.

most wise and learned. And it proved to be a great corruption and depravation of the true original doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and a future state. They endeavoured indeed to explain it so as to accommodate it to moral purposes, by supposing different kinds of bodies which they were appointed to animate, in order to preserve some appearance of future rewards and punishments. But in reality upon this scheme there could be no proper retributions in another life for what was done in the present. For in the several transmigrations from one body to another, the soul was generally supposed to have no remembrance in a succeeding body of the actions it had done, and the events which had happened to it in a former. Pythagoras indeed pretended to remember the several transmigrations he had passed through, and what he had done, and what had befallen him in the several bodies he had animated: but this was represented as a peculiar and extraordinary privilege, granted to him by Mercury, and which was not supposed to be the common case of transmigrated souls. And if the soul in its several removes forgets what was done in the former body, it cannot, when entered into another body, be properly said to be rewarded or punished for what it had done before, and of which it had no consciousness.

It is plain therefore that the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, on supposition that this transmigration was to begin immediately upon the soul's departure from the present body, which seems to be the notion that many entertained of it, and probably Pythagoras himself, left no proper place for a state of future retributions.

Others therefore supposed that souls were first to go to Hades or the Inferi, where they were supposed to have a remembrance of their past actions, and to be rewarded or punished accordingly. And when they had abode there for some time they were to enter into bodies of various

kinds, and after a succession of transmigrations were to be refunded into the universal soul, and to lose their individual subsistence.

The transmigrations which have been mentioned were supposed to belong to all human souls in general. But there were exceptions made in favour of some privileged persons.

This leads me to another observation upon the doctrine of those philosophers who professed to believe a future state; and that is, that when they speak in the highest strains of future happiness, it relates chiefly to some privileged souls of distinguished eminence, but affords no great comfort or encouragement to the common sort of pious and virtuous persons. With regard to these last, Socrates and Plato suppose them to go to Elysium and the Islands of the blessed, but after temporary abode there (*f*), to pass through several transmigrations, and were at length to return to life again in such bodies of men or beasts as were best suited to them, or as they themselves should chuse (*g*). But both these philosophers give a high idea

(*f*) The learned Bishop of Gloucester has observed, that "the antients distinguished the souls of men into three species, the human, the heroic, and the dæmonic. The two last were indeed believed to enjoy eternal happiness for their public services on earth, not indeed in Elysium, but in heaven, where they became a kind of demigods. But all of the first which include the great body of mankind, were understood to have their designation in purgatory, Tartarus, or Elysium. The first and last of which abodes were temporary, and the second only eternal." Div. Leg. vol. I. p. 396. 2d edit.

(*g*) See here above p. 311. 312. and compare what Plato says in his Gorgias, Oper. p. 312. F. with what is said in the Phædo, ibid. p. 386. E, F. and in his tenth Republic, ibid. p. 521. edit. Lugd.



of the happiness which some persons shall be raised to after their departure hence, that they shall be admitted to the fellowship of the gods in celestial abodes, but these were only such as having applied themselves to the study of philosophy, had lived abstracted from the body and all corporeal things, and had arrived to an eminent degree of wisdom and purity: or such great and heroic souls as had been eminently useful to the public. Plato in his fifth Republic says, that they who died in war, after having behaved with courage and bravery, become holy and terrestrial dæmons, averters of evil, and guardians of mankind, and that their sepulchres should be honoured, and they themselves should be worshipped as dæmons (*h*). But it cannot be denied, that a person might behave with great courage and bravery, and die in the war in the cause of his country, and yet in other respects be far from deserving the character of a good and virtuous man. And in that very book he allows such a man, as a reward of his bravery, liberties in indulging his amorous inclinations, in no wise consistent with the rules of purity and virtue. But in this, as well as other instances, Plato and the other philosophers took care to adapt their notions of a future state and its rewards to political ends and views, and had not so much a regard to what they themselves thought to be the truth, as to what they judged to be for the public utility, and the interest of the state. Cicero places those who had been serviceable to their country, in preserving and assisting it, and enlarging its dominion, not merely in Elysium, which was only a temporal felicity, but in heaven, where they were to be happy for ever. "Omnibus qui patriam conservârint, jûverint, auxerint, certum esse in cœlo ac definitum locum, ubi beati ævo

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(*h*) Plato Oper. p. 464, 465. edit. Lugd.

sempiterno fruuntur (*i*).” The Stoics held that the common souls at death, or soon after it, were to be resolved into the universal nature, but that great and eminent ones were to continue to the conflagration, and that some of them should be advanced to the dignity of gods. The Egyptians, notwithstanding their notions of the transmigration of souls, supposed that some souls might be taken immediately into the fellowship of the gods; as appears from the remarkable prayer addressed to the sun, and all the gods the givers of life, on the behalf of the person deceased; of which some notice was taken above (*k*). But this seems to have been confined to persons of eminence, and was not supposed to extend to the vulgar. In like manner the Indian Gymnosophists, who were zealous abettors of the doctrine of transmigration, seem to have made exceptions to the general law in their own favour, as having attained to an exalted degree of sanctity; and that by burning themselves in the fire they should go out of the body perfectly pure, and have an immediate access to the gods. It is also supposed in the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, that they who came up to the height of the Pythagorean precepts, and lived an abstracted and philosophical life, would at their death be made heroes or dæmons, and taken into the fellowship of the gods (*l*). To this notion of many of the philosophers concerning the happiness reserved in a future state for some eminent souls, Tacitus seems to refer in his life of Agricola, when he saith, “*Si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguuntur animæ magnæ, &c.*” where he seems to make it the special privilege of great souls, not

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(*i*) Cic. in *Somnio Scipionis*, cap. 3.

(*k*) Page 39 of this volume.

(*l*) *Ibid.*

to be extinguished with the body: and even of this he speaks doubtfully.

It appears then that the Gospel doctrine of eternal life and happiness, promised and prepared for all good men without exception, whether in a high or low condition, learned or unlearned, who live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and go on in a patient continuance in well doing, was not taught by the most eminent of those philosophers, who professed to believe the immortality of the soul and a future state. The happiness proposed to be enjoyed even in their Elysium, was to be comparatively but of a short duration: Virgil fixes it to a thousand years. And though they talked of some eminent and privileged souls of great men and philosophers, who were supposed to be raised to heaven, and there to enjoy eternal happiness, or even to become demi-gods or dæmons, yet they could not, in consistency with their schemes, understand this of a happiness which was in the strict and proper sense eternal, and never to have an end. For, as hath been already shewn, it was a notion which generally obtained among them, that at certain periods which the Stoics termed conflagrations, and which were to happen at the end of what they, as well as the Pythagoreans and Platonists, called the great year, there should be an utter end put to the present state of things; and the souls of all men, and even of those of them which had become gods, dæmons, or heroes, were to be resumed into the universal soul, and thereby lose their individual existence: after which there was to be an universal renovation or reproduction of all things; and a new course was to begin in every respect like the old; and that such periodical destructions and renovations should succeed one another in infinitum.

The observations which have been made are sufficient to shew that those antient philosophers, who are generally

looked upon as the ablest asserters of the immortality of the soul and a future state, had wrong and confused notions concerning it; and that those Christian writers are much mistaken who represent the antient Pagan philosophers as having taught the same doctrine concerning a future state, which, to our unspeakable comfort and advantage, is brought into a clear and open light by the Gospel.



## CHAPTER VI.

Those that seemed to be the most strenuous advocates for the immortality of the soul and a future state among the antients, did not pretend to any certainty concerning it. The uncertainty they were under appears from their way of managing their consolatory discourses on the death of their friends. To this also it was owing, that in their exhortations to virtue they laid little stress on the rewards of a future state. Their not having a certainty concerning a future state, put them upon schemes to supply the want of it. Hence they insisted upon the self-sufficiency of virtue for complete happiness without a future recompence: and asserted, that a short happiness is as good as an eternal one.

ANOTHER important observation with regard to those antient philosophers, who were esteemed the ablest advocates for the immortality of the soul and a future state, is, that after all the pains they took to prove it, they did not pretend to an absolute certainty, nor indeed do they seem to have fully satisfied themselves about it. The passages to this purpose are well known, and have been often quoted, but cannot be entirely omitted here.

Socrates himself, when he was near death, in discoursing with his friends concerning the immortality of the soul, expresses his hope that he should go to good men after death, "but this (says he) I would not absolutely affirm." He indeed is more positive as to what relates to his going to the gods after death, though this he also qualifies, by saying, that "if he could affirm any thing concerning matters of such a nature, he would affirm this.—*Ἐπὶ τὶ ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων διισχυρισαίμεν ἂν καὶ τῷτο (m).*" And he concludes that long discourse concerning the state of souls after death with saying, "That these things are so as I have represented

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(m) See Plato's *Phædo*, Opera, p. 377. H. edit. Lugd.

them it does not become any man of understanding to affirm:" though he adds, " that if it appears that the soul is immortal, it seems reasonable to think, that either such things or something like them are true, with regard to our souls and their habitations after death: and that it is worth making a trial, for the trial is noble (*n*)."

And in his apology to his judges, he comforts himself with this consideration, that " there is much ground to hope that death is good: for it must necessarily be one of these two; either the dead man is nothing, and hath not a sense of any thing; or it is only a change or migration of the soul hence to another place, according to what we are told, *κατα τὰ λεγόμενα*. If there is no sense left, and death is like a profound sleep, and quiet rest without dreams, it is wonderful to think what gain it is to die; but if the things which are told us are true, that death is a migration to another place, this is still a much greater good." And soon after, having said, that those " who live there are both in other respects happier than we, and also in this, that for the rest of their time they are immortal," he again repeats what he said before; " If the things which are told us are true," *"Εἰπερ τὰ λεγόμενα ἀληθῆ ἔσιν*: where he seems to refer to some antient traditions which were looked upon as divine, and which he hoped were true, but which he was not absolutely sure of.

And he concludes his apology with these remarkable words; " It is now time to depart hence: I am going to die; you shall continue in life; but which of us shall be in a better state, is unknown to all but God (*o*)."

What has been observed concerning Socrates, holds equally concerning Plato, who generally speaks his own

(*n*) See Plato's *Phædo*, Opera, p. 401. A.

(*o*) Ibid. p. 368. H. 369. A. C, D. edit. Lugd.

sentiments, especially in what relates to the immortality of the soul and a future state, by the mouth of Socrates.

None of the antient philosophers has argued better for the immortality of the soul than Cicero: but at the same time he takes care to let us know, that he followed only that which appeared to him the most probable conjecture, and which was the utmost he could attain to, but did not take upon him to affirm it as certain. This is what he declares in the beginning of his discourse upon that subject: "*Ut homunculus unus à multis probabilia conjecturâ sequens, ultra enim quo progredior, quàm ut verisimilia videam, non habeo (p).*" And after having mentioned a great variety of opinions about the human soul, and particularly whether it dies with the body, or survives it; and if the latter, whether it is to have a perpetual existence, or is only to continue for a time after its departure from the body; he concludes with saying, "Which of these opinions is true, some god must determine. Which is most probable, is a great question."—"Harum sententiarum quæ vera sit deus aliquis viderit: quæ verisimillima magna questio est (q)."

The uncertainty of the most excellent Pagan philosophers were under with regard to a future state farther appears, in that in their disputations and discourses, which were designed to fortify themselves or others against the fear of death, as also in their consolatory discourses on the death of deceased friends, they still proceeded upon alternatives; that death is either a translation to a better state, or is an utter extinction of being, or at least a state of insensibility. It was with this consideration that Socrates comforted himself under the near prospect of death, as appears from the

(p) Tuscul. Disput. lib. i. cap. 9.

(q) Ibid. cap. 11.

passages already produced. In like manner Cicero's whole disputation in his celebrated book above-mentioned, the professed design of which is to fortify men against the fear of death, turns upon this alternative, with which he concludes his discourse: That "if the day of our death brings with it not an extinction of our being, but only a change of our abode, nothing can be more desirable; but if it absolutely destroys and puts an end to our existence, what can be better than, amidst the labours and troubles of this life, to rest in a profound and eternal sleep?"—*Si supremus ille dies non extinctionem, sed commutationem adfert loci, quid optabilius? Sin autem perimit ac delet omnino, quid melius quam in mediis vitæ laboribus obdormiscere, et itâ conniventem somno consopiri sempiterno (r)?*" And this is the consideration that he seems to me to rely principally upon.

There are several passages of Seneca to the same purpose, some of which are cited above, p. 292. To which I shall add one more from his *Consolation to Polybius*, who was grieved for the death of his brother. He directs him to argue with himself thus: "If the dead have no sense, my brother has escaped from all the incommodities of life, and is restored to that state he was in before he was born: and being free from all evil, fears nothing, desires nothing, suffers nothing. If the dead have any sense, the soul of my brother, being let loose as it were from a long confinement, and entirely his own master, exults, and enjoys a clear sight of the nature of things, and looks down as from a higher situation upon all things human with contempt; and he has a nearer view of divine things, the reasons of which he has long sought in vain. Why therefore do I languish



for the want of him, who is either happy, or not at all? To lament one that is happy is envy, and one that has no existence is madness (*s*)."

Plutarch, as was before observed, has several passages, from which it may be concluded that he looked upon the immortality of the soul as a probable opinion, yet he sometimes expresses himself in a manner which seems to shew that he either did not believe it, or was not certain of it. In his consolation to Apollonius he observes, that Socrates said that death is either like to a deep sleep, or to a journey afar off and of a long continuance, or to the entire extinction of soul and body. This he quotes with approbation, and sets himself distinctly to shew, that in none of these views can death be considered as an evil (*t*). And in the treatise which is designed to prove that no man can live pleasantly according to the tenets of Epicurus, speaking of the hope of immortality, he calls it *ἡ περὶ τὸ μὐθωδὲς*

(*s*) Senec. Consol. ad Polyb. cap. 27. "Si nullus defunctis sensus sit, evasit omnia frater meus vitæ incommoda; et in eum restitutus est locum, in quo fuerat antequàm nasceretur, et expers omnis mali nihil timet, nihil cupit, patitur. Si est aliquis defunctis sensus, nunc animus fratris mei, velut ex diutino carcere missus, tandem sui juris et arbitrii, gestit, et rerum naturæ spectaculo fruitur, et humana omnia ex superiore loco despicit, divina verò, quorum rationem tamdiu frustrà quæsierat, propius intuetur. Quid itaque ejus desiderio maceror, qui aut beatus aut nullus est? Beatum deflare, invidia est, nullum dementia."

(*t*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 107. D. Here one part of the alternative is the utter extinction of being; and he endeavours to shew, that on that supposition death is not an evil; and yet, *ibid.* p. 1105. A. in his treatise *Non posse suaviter vivi* he very justly argues, that the notion of utter dissolution and extinction at death does not take away the fear of death, but rather confirms it; since this very thing is what nature has a strong aversion to.

τῆς ἀιδιότητος ἔλπις, “the fabulous hope of immortality.” Or, as the learned Mr. Baxter renders it in his English translation of that tract, “The hope conceived of eternity from the tales and fables of the antients (*u*).” And in his treatise of superstition, he supposes death to be the final period of our existence, and that the fear of any thing after it is the effect of superstition: “Death (says he) is to all men the end of life, but to superstition it is not so. She stretches out her bounds beyond those of life, and makes her fears of a longer duration than our existence.” Πινας τῆ βίης πασιν ἀνθρώποις ἡ θάνατος, τῆς δὲ δισιδαιμονίας ἔδ’ ἔτ’ οὐ, ἀλλ’ ὑπερβάλλει τὰς ὁρᾶς ἔπεινε τῆ ζῆν, μακρότερον τῆ βίης ποιῶσα τὸν φόβον (*x*).

So great is the inconsistency which frequently appears in the writings of the antient philosophers on this and other articles of importance. They are so often varying in their doctrine, seeming to affirm in one place what they treat as fabulous and uncertain in another, that some very learned persons have thought it could not be otherwise accounted for, than by supposing a great difference between what is called the exoteric and esoteric doctrine; i. e. the doctrine they taught openly to the people, and that which they taught privately to their disciples, whom they let into the secrets of their scheme. I shall not enter into the controversy about the meaning of the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric doctrine of the antients. I am apt to think that it relates sometimes to their treating on different subjects, and sometimes to their different manner of treating the same subject. For the same doctrine was often delivered by the philosophers both to their disciples and to the people; to the one in a gross and popular, to the other in a

(*u*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1104. C.

(*x*) Plutarch. de Superstit. Opera, tom. II. p. 166. F. edit. Xyl.

more philosophical and abstracted way. That this was one principal thing intended by that distinction, may be justly concluded from that noted passage of Cicero, where, speaking of the doctrine of the Peripatetics concerning the *sumum bonum* or chief good, he mentions two kinds of books published by them; some written in the popular way, which they called *exoteric*, the other more accurately and philosophically, which they left in commentaries; and that though they do not always seem to say the same things, yet in the main there was in reality no difference or disagreement between them. “*De summo autem bono, quia duo genera librorum sunt, unum populariter scriptum quod ἑωτερικὸν adpellârunt, alterum limatius quod in commentariis reliquerunt, non semper idem dicere videntur: nec in summâ tamen ipsâ aut varietas est ulla apud hos quidem quos nominavi, aut inter ipsos dissensio (y).*” But whatever may be supposed to be the precise meaning of *exoterical* and *esoterical*, as applied to the writings of the antient philosophers, and though it is not a proof, or even a presumption, of a doctrine’s not being agreeable to their real sentiments, because it was taught in their *exoterical* or popular discourses, yet, on the other hand, it cannot well be denied, that they sometimes chose to disguise their sentiments, and conceal them from the people: and that we cannot always be sure that what they delivered in their popular discourses was what they themselves believed to be true. It was a maxim among many of the antients, that it was lawful to deceive the people for the public good. They were for the most part not very strict in their notions with respect to the obligations of truth; and thought there was no harm in making use of falsehood when it was profitable. This was what

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(y) Cic. de Finib. Bon. et Mal. lib. v. cap. 5. p. 358. Davis.



Plato himself made no scruple to avow; concerning which, see above, p. 225. And in this he was followed by other Platonists, of which we have a remarkable instance in Synesius. He was raised to a bishopric in the Christian church, but continued to be a determined Platonist, and had so far imbibed the spirit and doctrine of that school, as to declare, that "philosophy, when it has attained to the truth, allows the use of lies and fictions." He adds, "As darkness is most proper, and commodious for those who have weak eyes, so I hold that lies and fictions are useful to the people, and that truth would be hurtful to those who are not able to bear its light and splendour; and he promises if the laws of the church would dispense with it, that he would philosophize at home, and talk abroad in the common strain, preaching up the general and received fables (z)." In this he certainly acted not according to the

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(z) The reader may see this, and other testimonies to the same purpose, produced by the celebrated author of the *Divine Legislation of Moses*, Vol. II. book iii. sect. 2. p. 92. et seq. edit. 4th. and also by the learned and judicious author of the *Critical Enquiry into the Opinions and Practices of the antient Philosophers*, chap. 11. To this I would add, that this method of the double doctrine, the one supposed to be strictly and philosophically true, the other in several instances false, but accommodated to the people, and designed for moral and political purposes, has long been in use in the east, and continues still to be so. This is particularly observed concerning the learned sect in China\*. F. Longobardi assures us, that some of their doctors made no scruple to declare to him, that the better to govern the people, they taught them several things which they themselves did not believe to be true. See his treatise in *Navarette's Account of the Empire of China*, p. 174, 175. and also p. 186, and 198. And in

\* See the former volume of this work, chap. 11. in the beginning.



spirit of the Gospel, which allows no such methods of falsehood and deceit; but it was not unsuitable to the maxims of many of the philosophers. And this tends not a little to weaken their credit, and often makes it difficult to know their real sentiments, especially if in different parts of their works, they advance different notions on the same subject. It seems to be a reasonable rule which is laid down by some learned critics, that when in one place they express themselves agreeably to the popular opinions, and in another seem to contradict them, in the former case they accommodate themselves to the notions of the people, and in the other speak their own sentiments. But yet I am apt to think, that the inconsistencies which may be observed in the writings of the antients, particularly with regard to the immortality of the soul and a future state, are not always to be charged upon this; but are often owing to their not having fixed notions, or a full assurance of those things in their own minds. The uncertainty they were under was, I doubt not, often the true source of their variations, and of their ambiguous, and sometimes contradictory way of talking on this subject.

To this uncertainty it was owing, that, in their moral systems, they did not apply the doctrine of a future state to the excellent ends and purposes for which it seems naturally to be fitted and designed. There are two principal

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the account Navarette there gives of the tenets of the sect of Foe, he takes notice of their exterior and interior doctrine: the latter of which is contrary to the former, especially with regard to a future state. They publicly preach it up to the people, but their interior doctrine rejects it. The same is said concerning the Bonzes. See Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, book ii. chap. 11. p. 78, 79. in the first volume of Churchill's Collection of Travels and Voyages.

uses to be made of it, where it is heartily believed. The one, is to support men against the troubles and sorrows of this present state, and the fear of death: the other is, to animate men to the practice of virtue amidst the many difficulties and discouragements to which they are here exposed.

As to the former of these, any one that is acquainted with the writings of those philosophers who lived before the coming of our Saviour, will find that there is little stress laid on the doctrine of a future state, for supporting or comforting men under the various troubles and sorrows of this present life, or for raising them above the fear of death.

Cicero indeed, in his first book of the *Tusculan Disputations*, the title of which is *De morte contemnendâ*, has brought many arguments, which he manages with great eloquence, to prove the immortality of the soul: but, as has been already observed, the consideration he seems principally to rely upon for supporting men against the fears of death, proceeds upon an alternative, which includes a supposition that the soul may die. For he argues, that either the soul shall be immortal and go to another state, or it shall be extinguished at death, and deprived of all sense: and that on either of these suppositions, death is not an evil, nor therefore to be feared. And in his following disputations, he makes no use of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and a future state, though the subject he treats of naturally led him to take some notice of it, if he had thought it might be depended upon. The subject of the second of these disputations is *De tolerando dolore*. That of the third *De ægritudine leniendâ*. The fourth treats *De reliquis animi perturbationibus*. But though a variety of considerations are offered, yet in none of these treatises is there one word of comfort or support drawn from the hope of immortality. All terminates in a man's supporting

himself by the strength of his own mind, and the force of his virtue; and in endeavouring to persuade men that none of the things which are generally accounted good or evil, are really good or evil, but are so in opinion only. And when he mentions the several methods of consolation proposed and insisted upon by the philosophers, not the least hint is given of a happier state of existence after this life is at an end (*a*). The fifth book of those disputations is designed to shew, that virtue is of itself sufficient for a happy life, "*virtutem ad beatè videndum seipsâ esse contentam.*" And in this whole disputation he abstracts entirely from the consideration of a future happiness or reward.

The same observation may be made on his five celebrated books *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*. The design of them is to enquire into the *summum bonum*, or chief happiness of man. But in this whole enquiry no notice is taken of a future state. It is all along supposed that a man is capable of attaining to a perfect happiness in this present life, and he is never directed to look beyond it to any future recompence, or to expect a complete happiness in the world to come.

As to the other main use to be made of the doctrine of a future state, for animating men to the practice of virtue, this also had little or no place in their moral systems. They seem to have looked upon this as too uncertain a thing to be relied upon, and therefore endeavoured to find out motives to virtue, independent on the belief of the rewards prepared for good men after this life is at an end. They represented in an elegant and beautiful manner the present conveniences and advantages of virtue, and the sa-

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(*a*) See particularly *Tuscul. Disput. lib. iii. cap. 31 et 32.*

tisfaction which attends it; but especially they insisted upon its intrinsic excellency, its dignity and beauty, and agreeableness to reason and nature, and its self-sufficiency to happiness, which many of them, especially the Stoics, the most rigid moralists among them, carried to a very high degree. Cicero in his *Offices*, and those excellent philosophers Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus in their works, which seem to be the best moral treatises Pagan antiquity has left us, go upon this scheme. They were sensible indeed, that in order to recommend virtue to the esteem of mankind, and engage them to pursue it, it was necessary to shew that it would be for their own highest advantage. Cicero observes, that all men naturally desire profit, and cannot do otherwise (*b*): and that if virtue be not profitable, men will not pursue it: and therefore he, as Socrates had done before, finds great fault with those who were for separating profit from honesty. He treats that maxim, which he says is a common one, that a thing may be honest without being profitable, and profitable without being honest, as the most pernicious notion, and the most destructive of all goodness, that ever entered into the minds of men (*c*): and that to separate profit from honesty is to pervert the first principles of nature (*d*). He therefore prefers the doctrine of the Stoics, who affirm, that whatsoever is honest must be also profitable, and that nothing is profitable but what is also honest, to that of the Peripatetics, who say, there are some things honest which are not profitable, and some things profitable which are not honest (*e*). This maxim of the Stoics, that virtue is always

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(*b*) *De Offic.* lib. iii. cap. 28.

(*c*) *Ibid.* lib. ii. cap. 3. et lib. iii. cap. 12.

(*d*) *Ibid.* lib. iii. cap. 28.

(*e*) *Ibid.* lib. iii. cap. 4.



most profitable, would certainly have been very just, if they had taken in the consideration of a future state, and argued, that besides the consideration of its natural excellency and good tendency, the all-wise and good Governor of the world will take care, that if good men be exposed to grievous temporal evils and sufferings, which he may permit for the trial and exercise of their virtue in this present state, they shall be compensated with glorious rewards in the world to come; so that in the final issue of things the greatest profit and happiness will upon the whole attend the practice and pursuit of real virtue and righteousness. But this was not the way the Stoics and the most eminent philosophers took. They affirmed that honest and profitable were exactly the same thing, and distinguishable only by an act of the mind (*f*). That virtue is the most profitable thing in the world, as being its own reward, and carrying a complete happiness in its own nature inseparable from it, abstracting from all consideration of a future recompence, or of any reward conferred upon those that practise it by the holy and beneficent Governor of the world. They had nothing therefore left but to persuade men, as well as they could, that supposing a good and virtuous man to be under the greatest outward torments which can be supposed, still he was at that very instant happy, uninterruptedly happy in the highest degree, merely by the independent force of his own virtue, abstracting from all other considerations whatsoever. But though this was a very magnificent way of talking, and seemed to shew a high sense of the dignity and excellency of virtue, it was too extravagant to have any great effect on the minds of men, or to support them in the practice of virtue under strong temptations, and

severe difficulties and trials. The Peripatetic maxim, which Cicero finds so much fault with, that there are some things honest which are not profitable, and some things profitable which are not honest, is agreeable to observation and experience, if we confine our views to this present life and state of things. Many instances may be supposed, and have actually happened, in which a man may be a loser in this present state by his steady adherence to the cause of truth and righteousness, and his virtue, instead of turning to his advantage, may bring upon him great calamities and sufferings of various kinds. The observation of that excellent critic and historian Dionysius Halicarnasseus is founded in common sense, and was no doubt the sentiment of many persons of learning and judgment in the Heathen world. "If," saith he, "along with the dissolution of the body, the soul also, whatsoever it is, be dissolved, I know not how those can be supposed to be happy, who have enjoyed no advantage by virtue, but have perished on the account of it." Εἰ μὲν ἔν ἅμα τοῖς σώμασι τοῖς διαλελυμένοις, καὶ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὅταν δὴ ποτε ἔσιν ἐκεῖνὸν, συνδιαλύεται, ἐκ οἷδα ὅπως μακαρίας ὑπολάβω τὲς μηδὲν ἀπολαύσαντας τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀγαθὸν, δι' αὐτὴν δὲ ταύτην ἀπολεμένους (g).

As the uncertainty the philosophers were under with regard to a future state seems to have been one principal reason of their crying up the absolute sufficiency of virtue to happiness, abstracted from all consideration of a future reward, so it was probably from the same views that several of them, especially the Stoics, advanced that strange maxim, that the duration of happiness contributes nothing to the rendering it more complete and desirable. It was a principle with Chrysippus, and which, as Plutarch informs

us, he frequently repeated, that "the length of time does not increase any good." "Οτι ἀγαθὸν χρόνος ἐκ αὐξῆς προσγενόμενος. And in a passage quoted by Plutarch from his sixth book of Moral Questions, he directly asserts, that "men are neither more happy for being longer so, nor is eternal felicity more eligible than that which is but for a moment." Plutarch justly exposes this way of talking as contrary to common sense, and shews that in this as well as several other instances Chrysippus contradicted himself (*h*). Nor was this merely an extraordinary flight of Chrysippus, but was the common doctrine of the Stoics. Cato says, "Stoicis non videtur optabilior, nec magis expetenda beata vita, si sit longa, quam si brevis (*i*).” Marcus Antoninus himself frequently intimates, that length of time makes no difference as to the perfection of virtue and happiness, that "three hours of such a life are sufficient (*k*).” And he supposes, that though a man has lived but a short time, the action of life may be a complete whole without any defect; πολλῆς καὶ ἀποσπαστέας (*l*). So that he may attain in this short life to the complete happiness and perfection of his nature. These maxims, understood as they were by the Stoics, proceeded upon a wrong supposition. It is true, that a good man may in a short time so far fulfil the work which is given him to do, and so well act the part appointed him here on earth, as to be graciously accepted of God, though not absolutely without defect, and to be rendered meet for that future state, where he shall attain to the true perfection and felicity of his nature; but to sup-

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(*h*) Plutarch de Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. II. p. 1046. et de Commun. Notit. ibid. p. 1060, 1061.

(*i*) Apud Cic. de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 14.

(*k*) Anton. lib. vi. sect. 23.

(*l*) Anton. lib. xi. sect. 1.

pose that in the present state of the human nature, he can in the short compass of this mortal life arrive to the utmost perfection of virtue and happiness "without any defect," and that the narrow term of this present life is as sufficient for this purpose, as if he were to live for ever in a future happy state of existence, is an extravagant way of talking, and of pernicious consequence, as it tends to quench the generous aspirations after immortality, which, as Cicero observes, are the strongest in the noblest minds. For why should they aspire after it, if, as Balbus the Stoic affirms, "immortality conduces nothing to an happy life?" "*Nihil ad beatè vivendum pertinet.*" But how much juster is the observation of Plato; "what can be truly great in so small a proportion of time? The whole age of man from his earliest childhood to extreme old age, being very small and inconsiderable (*m*)."

And indeed notwithstanding the expedients contrived by the philosophers for making the perfection of virtue and happiness complete, abstracting from all consideration of a future state, yet some of them could not help acknowledging, that the belief of a future state is of great importance to the cause of virtue in the world. Socrates, who, as the learned bishop of Gloucester allows, really believed a future state of retributions, after having mentioned the judges in Hades, and their assigning rewards to good men and punishments to the wicked, adds, "by such sayings as these I am persuaded, and make it my aim, that I may appear before my judges [*Æacus* or *Minos*] having a most pure and sound mind." And he goes on to declare, that therefore he "would endeavour, to the utmost of his power, to live and die a good man: and exhorts others to do

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(*m*) Plato's *Republ.* x.



so too (n)." And he concludes his discourse in the Phædo with observing, that on the account of what he had said concerning the rewards and happy abodes prepared for good men in a future state, "it is necessary to do what we can to attain wisdom and virtue in this life. For, (says he,) the prize or reward of the conflict is excellent, and the hope is great." Καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἄθλον, καὶ ἡ ἔλπις μεγέλη. He adds, that it does not become any man of understanding peremptorily to affirm that these things are as he represented them; but that it is reasonable to think that these things, or something like them, are true, and that it is worth making a trial though with hazard, for the trial is noble (o).

Plutarch in his treatise, that no man can live happily according to the tenets of Epicurus, represents those who have led pious and just lives as expecting glorious and divine things after death; and "it is admirable to think how carefully they apply their minds to virtue, οἷον φρονέσι τῇ ἀρετῇ; who believe that as the athletæ in the public games do not receive the crown till after they have gone through the contest and proved victorious, so the reward of the victory achieved by good men in this life is reserved for them after this life is at end (p)." And he afterwards says, that "they who look upon death to be the beginning of another and a better life, have both more pleasure in the good things they now enjoy than other men, as expecting still greater hereafter; and if things do not go according to their mind they do not take it much amiss; but the hopes of good things after death, which contain ineffable pleasures and expectations, take way and obliterate every defect and

(n) See at the end of Plato's Gorgias, Opera, p. 314. B. edit. Lugd.

(o) Ibid. p. 401. A.

(p) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1105. C.

offence out of the soul; which thereby is enabled to bear the things which befall it with ease and moderation (*q*).” I cannot but remark on this occasion, that at the time when Plutarch flourished, Christianity had made a considerable progress in the world, and with it the knowledge and hope of life and immortality, or of eternal happiness for the good and righteous, was far more generally diffused than before. It is true, that some notion of the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishments of a future state, had obtained among the nations from the most remote antiquity, though mixed with much obscurity and many fables; but at the time of our Saviour’s coming the belief of these things was, as I shall have occasion to shew, very much lost even among the people, especially in the Roman empire, then the most knowing and civilized part of the Gentile world. But wherever the light of Christianity shone, the doctrine of eternal life was openly professed by those that embraced it; and the notion of it came to spread more and more among the Heathens themselves. The belief of that future happiness had produced wonderful effects in the converts to Christianity, both in their constancy and even joy under the greatest sufferings, taken notice of by the Pagan writers themselves (*r*), and in the purity and innocency of their

(*q*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1106. A, B.

(*r*) Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus, among others, represent the Christians as shewing great fortitude, and a contempt of death, but attribute it to habit and obstinacy, though it was built on a much nobler foundation than Stoicism could pretend to. Epict. Dissert. book iv. chap. 7. sect. 2. and Anton. Medit. book xi. sect. 3. In the Glasgow translation of Antoninus there is a note upon the passage now referred to, which deserves to be transcribed here. “It is well known, that the ardor of Christians for the glory of martyrdom was frequently immoderate, and was

lives and manners. To this Pliny gives a noble testimony in his celebrated epistle to Trajan, who lived about the same time with Plutarch. The Christian apologists, in their public writings addressed to the emperors, frequently mention the virtuousness and regularity of their lives, as a thing that could not be denied even by their bitterest adversaries. Celsus himself, notwithstanding his strong prejudices against Christianity, yet owns that there were among Christians temperate, modest, and understanding persons, *καὶ μετρίως καὶ ἐπιεικῶς, καὶ συνετῶς* (s). I do not therefore see any absurdity in supposing, that when Plutarch speaks of pious and just persons that expected such glorious and divine things after death, he might have a secret reference to the Christians, the purity of whose lives, and their being strongly animated by the hopes of a blessed immortality, was well known; and if he thought them in an error, he might think them "*felices errore suo*," happy in their error, as Lucan expresses it, and that their hope of future happiness had a good effect upon them, which was very proper to the purpose he had in view in that treatise; his never expressly mentioning the Christians in all his works, though a man so curious as he was may well be supposed to have had some knowledge of them, as they were then very numerous both in Greece and Rome and in

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censured by some even of the primitive fathers. This is no dishonour to Christianity, that it did not quite extirpate all sorts of human frailty. And there is something so noble in the steadfast lively faith, and the stable persuasion of a future state, which must have supported that ardor, that it makes a sufficient apology for this weakness, and gives the strongest confirmation of the divine power accompanying the Gospel."

(s) Orig. cont. Cels. lib. i. p. 22. edit. Spenser.

several parts of the Lesser Asia, seems to be an affected silence: and it may possibly be owing to this, that as he did not think proper to give a favourable account of them, so on the other hand he had no mind to speak ill of them, and therefore chose not to speak of them at all.



## CHAPTER VII.

▲ state of future rewards necessarily connotes future punishments. The belief of the former without the latter might be of pernicious consequence. The ancient philosophers and legislators were sensible of the importance and necessity of the doctrine of future punishments. Yet they generally rejected and discarded them as vain and superstitious terrors. The maxim universally held by the philosophers, that the gods are never angry, and can do no hurt, considered.

THE doctrine of a future state comprehends both the rewards conferred upon good men, and the punishments which shall be inflicted upon the wicked in the world to come. The one of these cannot be rightly separated from the other. And the belief of the latter is at least as necessary as the former; and without which the consideration and belief of a future state will have no great influence on the moral state of mankind.

It is a good observation of M. de Montesquieu, that the idea of a place of future rewards necessarily imports that of a place or state of future punishments: and that when the people hope for the one without fearing the other, civil laws to have no force (*t*). It would probably among other ill effects encourage self-murder, which is said to be very common amongst the disciples of Fo in China, who hold the immortality of the soul (*u*). Several passages might be produced to shew that the wisest of the Heathens were sensible of the great importance and necessity of the doctrine of

(*t*) L'Esprit des Loix, vol. II. liv. 24. chap. 14 p. 162. edit. Edinb.

(*u*) See a treatise of a Chinese philosopher in Du Halde's History of China, vol. III. p. 272. English translation.

future punishments as well as rewards, to the well-being of society. Accordingly this always made a part of the representations of a future state exhibited in the mysteries, which were under the direction of the civil magistrate. Zaleucus in his excellent preface to his laws represents it as a thing which ought to be believed, that the gods inflict punishments upon the wicked. And he concludes with taking notice of the happiness of the just, and the vengeance attending the wicked (*x*). Future punishments are here plainly implied, though not directly mentioned. Timæus the Pythagorean, at the latter end of his treatise of the soul of the world, praises the Ionian poet for recording from antient tradition the endless or irremissible torments prepared for the unhappy dead. And he adds, that there is a necessity of inculcating the dread of these strange or foreign punishments. Plato in his fourth book of *Laws* takes notice of an antient tradition concerning the justice of God as punishing the transgressors of his law. "God, as antient tradition teacheth, having or holding in himself, the beginning, the end, and middle of all things that are, pursues the right way, going about according to nature, and justice always accompanies and follows him, which is a punisher of those that fall short of the divine law (*y*)."  
This passage represents God as a just punisher of transgressors, but makes no express mention of the punishments of a future state. But in another passage in his seventh epistle, written to Dion's friends, which I had occasion to mention before, see above p. 273. he says, "we ought always to believe the

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(*x*) Apud Stob. serm. 42.

(*y*) Ὁ μὲν δὴ θεὸς (ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ πάλαιος λόγος) ἀρχήν τε καὶ τελευτήν, καὶ τὰ μίσα τῶν ὄντων ἀπαντῶν ἔχων, εὐθείαν περαινέει κατὰ φύσιν περιπορευόμενος· τῇ δὲ αὖτις ἐνέπεται δικὴ τῶν ἀπολειπομένων τῷ θεῷ νόμῳ τιμωρὸς.  
Plat. Oper. p. 600. G. edit. Lugd.

antient and sacred words, or traditions, which shew both that the soul is immortal, and that it hath judges, and suffers the greatest punishments, when it leaves the body (z).” And on several other occasions, when speaking of a future state, he takes notice of the punishments which shall be inflicted upon the wicked, and describes them in a popular and poetical manner. In the conclusion of his *Phædo*, he introduces Socrates, in one of his most serious and solemn discourses just before his death, talking after the manner of the poets of the judges after death, of Tartarus, Acheron, the Archerusian lake, Pyriphlegethon, and Cocytus: that some after having gone through various punishments shall be purged and absolved, and after certain periods shall be freed from their punishments: “But those who by reason of the greatness of their sins seem to be incurable, who have committed many and great sacrileges, or unjust and unlawful murders and other crimes of the like nature, shall have a fate suitable to them, being thrown down into Tartarus, from whence they never shall escape (a).” The like representation is made at the latter end of Plato’s tenth Republic, in the story of Erus Armenius. In his *Gorgias* also he supposes the wicked, and those who were incurable, to be sent to Tartarus, where they shall be punished with endless torments, as an example to others: and he approves of Homer, for representing wicked kings who had tyrannized over mankind, among those who shall be so punished (b). There is another passage in his *Phædo* which ought not to be omitted. He says, that “if death were to be the dissolution of the whole, it would be good news to bad men when they die, ἔρμαιον ἢ τοῖς κακοῖς ἀποθανῆσι, to have an end put to their

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(z) Plato *Oper.* p. 716. A.

(a) *Ibid.* p. 400. F.

(b) *Ibid.* p. 313. E, F. edit. Lugd.

body, and to their own pravity, as well as to their souls: but that since the soul appears to be immortal, there is no other way of escaping evil, no other safety, but to become as good and as wise as they can (c)." Cicero in his second book of Laws, shewing the usefulness of religion to society, observes, that many have been reclaimed from wickedness by the fear of divine punishment. "Quam multos divini supplicii metus à scelere revocavit (d)."

Plutarch in his treatise, That it is not possible to live pleasurably according to the doctrine of Epicurus, observes, that Epicurus himself says, there is no other way of restraining bad men from doing evil and unjust actions, but by fear of punishment: and Plutarch gives it as his own opinion, that therefore it is proper to propose to them all kinds of terrors and punishments, both from heaven and earth: and that it is for their own advantage to be deterred from perpetrating criminal actions by the fear of those things which are to follow after death (e). And in his treatise *De serâ Numinis vindictâ*, he observes, that "if nothing remains to the soul after the expiration of this life, but death puts an end to all favour and all punishment, one might say that the Deity dealt very tenderly and remissly with those bad men, who are punished quickly, and die soon (f)."

If we proceed from the philosophers to the poets, who were the popular divines, and generally spoke agreeably to the common notions and ancient traditions, they often speak of future punishments. This is particularly true of Homer. Euripides represents it as a certain thing, that

(c) Plato. Oper. p. 397. H. p. 398. A.

(d) Cic. de Leg. lib. ii. cap. 7.

(e) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1105. edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620.

(f) Ibid. tom. II. p. 555. C.



whosoever among mortals is bad and vicious is punished by the gods.

— καὶ γὰρ ὅς τις ἀνὴρ ἐρώταν  
κακὸς πεφυκὴ ζημιῶσιν οἱ θεοί.

Eurip. Ion.

There is a passage which Justin Martyr ascribes to Philemon, Clemens Alexandrinus and Theodoret to Diphylus, in which, after having said, that there are in Hades two several paths, the one of the just, the other of the unjust, he adds, “don’t be deceived; there is a judgment in Hades, which God the Lord of all, whose dreadful name I dare not so much as mention, will certainly execute.” And soon after he says to those who imagine there is no God, “there is, there is a God; and if any man does evil, he will at length suffer punishment for it (g).”

Virgil in his sixth *Æneid*, where he probably has a particular reference to the representations made of a future state in the mysteries, as well as to those made by Homer, represents several sorts of persons, who had been guilty of very heinous crimes, as adjudged to grievous punishments in Tartarus. Vers. 565 et seq.

The passages which have been produced shew that the wisest among the Heathens saw the importance of the doctrine of future punishments; and how necessary it was in their opinion to the preserving good order in the world. Celsus was so sensible of this, that he would not allow Christianity the honour of being thought to have taught this doctrine to mankind. He says, that “they [the Christians] rightly maintain, that these persons who lead good lives shall be happy, and that the unjust shall be subject

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(g) See Dr. Sykes’s *Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion*, cap. xiv. 375.

to eternal evils," οἱ δὲ ἀδικοὶ παντὶν ἀνάντων κακοῖς συνέχονται: and he adds, that "from this doctrine neither they nor any one else should depart (*h*).<sup>1</sup>" What makes this testimony more remarkable is, that Celsus was an Epicurean, and therefore did not himself really believe this doctrine. It must therefore be only owing to the conviction he had that it was a doctrine useful to society. And it is proper to observe upon this occasion, that those among the Heathens who professed to believe, or would have the people to believe future punishments, thought it would not be sufficient to answer the end, if some of the punishments for incorrigible sinners, guilty of enormous crimes, were not eternal.

Notwithstanding what has been said, it cannot be denied, that many of the most celebrated philosophers have endeavoured to weaken and explode that doctrine of future punishments, which they themselves could not but acknowledge to be useful and even necessary to society.

It has been already shewn that Pythagoras, according to the account Ovid gives of his sentiments, which seems to be a just one, rejects the stories of future punishments as vain terrors. And Timæus, a celebrated disciple of his, at the same time that he says there is a necessity of inculcating the doctrine of those foreign torments, plainly intimates that he looks upon the accounts which are given of them to be fabulous and false.

Though Plato has many passages concerning future punishments, and even in some of his most serious discourses adopts the representations made of them by the poets; yet at other times he rejects them, as giving too frightful an idea of Hades, or the future state. In the beginning of his third Republic he declares his disapprobation of them be-

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(*h*) Origen cont. Cels. lib. viii. p. 409. edit. Spenser.

cause they tended to intimidate the soldiery. After saying that no man can be brave who fears death, he asks "do you think that man will face death with courage, and in battle prefer death to slavery, who believes that the things which are said concerning the state of the dead are true, and as dreadful as they are represented?" He therefore blames those who make such a discouraging representation of Hades, and would have them rather commend and praise it, "otherwise they neither say the things that are true, nor what is proper for military men to hear. Therefore," says he, "all those direful and terrible names are to be rejected, Cocytus, and Styx, and the Inferi, and the ghosts of the dead, and all the names of that kind, which cause all that hear them to shudder and tremble (i). ' Nothing can be a more express condemnation of the doctrine he himself introduces Socrates as delivering in his *Phædo*, the very day of his death: and the reason he here gives for rejecting these things, viz. the not rendering death frightful, will hold not merely against the poetical representation, but against all future punishments after death, which yet he elsewhere represents as antient and sacred traditions, to which an entire credit is to be given. We must therefore either say, that Plato himself did not believe future punishments, or

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(i) Οὐκ ἔτι καὶ τὰ περὶ ταῦτα ὀνόματα πάντα δεινὰ τε, καὶ φοβερά, ἀποβλητέα, κακὺς τε καὶ εὐγας, καὶ ἐνέρας καὶ ἀλίφαντας, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τέττε τῷ τύτῃ ὀνομαζόμενα φρεῖν δὲ ποιεῖ, ὡς οἶον τε, πάντας τὰς ἀκρόντας. *Platon. Oper. p. 432. E.* It may also be observed, that in his *Cratylus* Plato introduces Socrates, as blaming those who represent Hades as a dark and gloomy abode, and derive the word from τὸ ἀειδὲς, as if it were void of light; and is rather for deriving it ἀπὸ τῶ πάντα τὰ καλά εἶδέναι, from knowing all things good and beautiful. Here he excludes every thing from the notion of a future state that might be apt to create terror, and seems to leave no room for future misery.

that from political views he judged it not proper to teach them to the people, that they might not have too frightful notions of death, which he thought would intimidate the citizens and soldiers. I would observe however, that he was not very consistent in his politics, since he sometimes declares for rejecting the future punishments in Hades, as not fit to be laid before the people, and yet at other times represents them as of great use for restraining men from vice and wickedness; which seems also to be the notion that the managers of the mysteries, who considered them in a political view, entertained of them.

None of the philosophers argued better for the immortality of the soul, and a future state in general, than Cicero. And yet in that very treatise where he takes the most pains to prove it, he discards the notion of future punishments, and openly disavows and ridicules them. Having mentioned Cocytus, Acheron, and the infernal judges, and the punishments which were supposed to be inflicted upon bad men after death, he introduces his auditor as saying, "*adcone me delirare censes, ut ista credam?*" "Do you think me so mad as to believe these things?" And again, "*quis est tam vecors quem ista moveant?*" "Who is so senseless as to be moved by them?" Nor can it be pretended, that he only rejects the fabulous representations made of these things by the poets, but admits the moral of those fables, or what they were designed to signify, viz. that there shall be punishments inflicted upon the wicked after death. For the whole argument of that book is so conducted as to exclude future punishments. His professed design is to fortify men against the fear of death, by proving that death is no evil. And his reasoning turns upon this point, that either our souls shall be extinguished at death, and then we shall have no sense of evil; or if they survive, and depart to another place (as he endeavours to prove they will) we shall be happy, and there is no future



misery to fear. And indeed, it may be observed concerning the philosophers in general, that in all their consolations against death, or discourses to shew that death is not to be feared, they constantly argue thus, That death shall be either an extinction of being, and a state of utter insensibility, or a remove to a better place; and they never once put the supposition of the souls being exposed to any evil or misery in a future state. The alternative still was this, that they were either to be happy after death, or not to be at all. "*Si maneat beati sunt,*" says Cicero; or as Seneca has it, "*Aut beatus, aut nullus.*"

What little regard Cicero himself, or even the Roman people in general, had to the doctrine of future punishments, is evident from that noted passage in his oration for Aulus Cluentius, delivered before the judges, and a public assembly of the people. He is there speaking of one Oppianicus, whom he represents as the worst of men, guilty of the most atrocious crimes, of repeated murders of his wives and nearest relations, and other heinous acts of wickedness, for which he was at length condemned and banished. And he observes, that if he had been a man of spirit, he would have chosen rather to have put an end to his own life, than to have endured the miseries of his exile. And as he was dead at the time when Cicero made this oration, he asks, "What evil hath death brought upon him, except we are induced by silly fables to think that he suffers the punishments of the wicked in the infernal regions, and that he has met with more enemies there than he left behind him here? and that by the punishments inflicted upon him for what he had done to his mother-in-law, his wives, his brother and children, he is precipitated headlong into the abodes of the wicked? If these things are false, as all men understand them to be, what has death taken from

him but a sense of pain (*i*)?" I do not think there can be a more express declaration against future punishments. And certainly, if such monsters of wickedness, as Oppianicus is represented to have been, suffer no punishments in another world, no man has reason to fear them.

Seneca has a very strong passage to the same purpose, in which, after absolutely rejecting the stories of future torments, as fables and idle terrors invented by the poets, he asserts, that "the dead man is affected with no evils."—"Nullis defunctum malis affici:"—that "death is the end and a release from all our pains and sorrows, beyond which our evils do not extend: and that it replaceth us in the same state of tranquillity we were in before we were born (*k*)."

The observation I made on Cicero holds equally with respect to Seneca. If he had contented himself with merely rejecting and ridiculing the poetical fables, he might have been excused: but it is evident that both these philosophers rejected the very substance of the doctrine itself, and allowed no future punishments at all. The same may be said concerning Epictetus and the Stoics in general: as to which I refer the reader what is observed here above, p. 150, 151. et p. 294, 295.

(*i*) "Nam nunc quidem quid tandem mali illi mors attulit? Nisi forte ineptiis ac fabulis ducimur, ut existimemus illum apud inferos impiorum supplicia perferre, ac plures illic offendisse inimicos quàm hic reliquisset? A socrus, ab uxoribus: à fratris et liberorum pœnis actum esse præcipitem in impiorum sedem atque regionem; quæ si falsa sint, id quod omnes intelligunt, quid ei tandem aliud mors eripuit, præter sensum doloris?" Orat. pro A. Cluentio, cap. 61.

(*k*) "Mors omnium dolorum et solutio est et finis: ultra quam mala nostra non exeunt: quæ nos in illam tranquillitatem, in quâ antequàm nasceremur jacuimus, reponit." In consol. ad Marciam, cap. 19.

Plutarch (as was observed before) in his treatise *De serâ numinis vindictâ*, argues for the immortality of the soul, and seems to assert the justice of God, and future rewards and punishments; yet in that very treatise he gives it as his own opinion, that the wicked need no other punishments, but their own bad lives and actions. "I am of opinion (saith he) if it be lawful to say so, that wicked men need neither the gods nor men to punish them: but their own life, being wholly corrupted and full of perturbation, is a sufficient punishment (*l*)."<sup>l</sup> And in his treatise to shew that it is not possible to live pleasantly according to the tenets of Epicurus, he calls the fear of punishment after death superstition; and afterwards he calls it τὸ παῖδικόν ἐκείνο δέος, "that childish fear;" and represents what was said of them as "fabulous stories, and the tales of mothers and nurses (*m*)."<sup>m</sup>

In his celebrated tract of superstition, he expresses himself as if he looked upon all fear of God, at least considered as a punisher, to be superstition: and that the man that feareth God, who is every where present, and whom nothing can escape, must be miserable. He blames those who look upon the evils and calamities which befall them, as divine punishments inflicted upon them for their sins (*n*). But

(*l*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 556. D. edit. Xyl.

(*m*) Ibid. p. 1104. B, C. 1105. B.

(*n*) Those no doubt are in the wrong, who interpret all the misfortunes of human life, which befall themselves or others, as divine judgments. But that in many cases it is highly just and proper to regard the afflictions and calamities which happen to us, as sent by God to correct and punish us for our sins, is not only the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, but perfectly agreeable to the dictates of sound reason, on supposition there is a God and a Providence; and if really believed, must have a good effect on the religious and moral conduct. And that Plutarch had

especially he censures those who have a dread of future punishments and torments after death, and condemns all fear of that kind as groundless, and the effect of a foolish superstition, without making any distinction, or giving the least hint that there are punishments prepared for wicked men in a future state. He finds fault with superstition for not looking upon death to be the end of life, but extending its fears beyond it, and for connecting with death the imagination of immortal evils. Συνέπτων τῇ θανάτῳ κακῶν ἐπίνοιαν ἀθανάτων (o). I would observe by the way, that this treatise of Plutarch, which is written in a very elegant and artful manner, and has been very much admired, and often quoted by our modern sceptical writers, and opposers of Revelation, has been very well answered, and the false reasoning and sophistry of it exposed by the learned bishop of Gloucester, in the last edition of his Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated (p).

There is another consideration of great moment, which has been strongly urged by the last-mentioned celebrated author, to prove that the philosophers did not believe future punishments. It is drawn from a remarkable passage of Cicero, in which he represents it as the opinion of all the philosophers, not only of those who denied a Providence, but of those who acknowledged it, that God is never angry, nor hurts any person. Some learned men, who are unwilling to admit the consequence which seems naturally to follow from it, are of opinion, that it is capable of a favourable interpretation; and that it is only designed to signify, that the Deity has no anger or passion like that

a notion of Divine Justice pursuing and punishing men for their sins, appears from his excellent tract *De serâ numinis vindictâ*.

(o) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. 166. F.

(p) Vol. II. book iii. sect. 6. p. 257, et seq.



which is in us, nor is ever carried by it to do hurt to his creatures. But Cicero seems to carry it much farther, so as not only to exclude all perturbation from the divine mind, but all punitive justice. His manner of introducing it is remarkable. He is speaking of Regulus's strict regard to the oath he had taken, even though he thereby exposed himself to the severest torments and death. And then he supposes an objection made, that Regulus acted a foolish part, since if he had violated his oath he had nothing to fear from Jupiter. "For it is a principle universally held by all the philosophers, both those who say that God never meddleth with the affairs of men, and those who think he is always active and concerning himself about us, that God is never angry, nor hurteth any one." He answers, "That in an oath its binding force is to be considered: for an oath is a religious affirmation; and what a man promises, as it were calling God to witness, ought to be kept; not out of fear of the anger of the gods, for there is no such thing, but out of regard to justice and fidelity (*q*)."

There is another passage of Cicero, in the second book of his *Offices*, which it is proper to mention on this occasion. Having proposed to treat of those things which may be most beneficial or hurtful to men, he observes it as a thing gene-

(*q*) "Quid est igitur, dixerit aliquis, in jurejurando? Num iratum timemus Jovem? At hoc quidem commune est omnium philosophorum; non eorum modò qui Deum nihil habere ipsum negotii dicunt nihil exhibere alteri, sed eorum etiam qui Deum semper agere aliquid et moliri volunt, nunquam nec irasci Deum, nec nocere. Hæc quidem ratio, non magis contra Regulum quàm contra omne jusjurandum valet. Sed in jurejurando non qui metus, sed quæ vis sit debet intelligi: est enim jusjurandum affirmatio religiosa. Quod autèm affirmatè quasi Deo teste promiseris, id tenendum est: jam enim non ad iram deorum quæ nulla est, sed ad justitiam et fidem pertinet." *De Offic. lib. iii. cap. 28, 29.*

rally believed, that to hurt men is incompatible with the divine nature; and seems to give this as a reason for taking no particular notice of the gods in that place (*r*). This may be compared with a remarkable passage of Seneca, which I mentioned before, but which ought not to be omitted here. Having observed that the gods are carried to do good by the goodness of their own nature, he adds, That "they neither will nor can hurt any one: they can neither suffer an injury nor do it; for whatsoever is capable of doing hurt, is capable of receiving it. That supreme and most excellent nature, of which they are partakers, both exempts them from dangers themselves, and renders them not dangerous to others (*s*).” Where he seems to affirm, that no hurt or danger is ever to be apprehended from the gods, as being contrary to their nature. Marcus Antoninus, speaking of the intelligence which governs the universe, saith, that no one is hurt by it (*t*). And he argues, that “if there be gods, then leaving the world is no such dreadful thing, for you may be sure they will do you no hurt.” Upon which Dacier remarks, that “the Stoics believed there was nothing to fear after death, because it was contrary to the nature of God to do ill to any one (*u*).”

It must be acknowledged, that there is no small difficulty in these and other passages of the like kind, which

(*r*) De Offic. lib. ii. cap. 3.

(*s*) “Quæ causa est diis benefaciendi? Natura. Errat siquis putat eos nocere velle Non possunt. Nec accipere injuriam queunt, nec facere. Lædere enim lædique conjunctum est. Summa illa et pulcherrima omnium natura, quos periculo exemit, ne periculosos quidem facit.” Sen. epist. 95. See also Sen. de Irâ, lib. ii. cap. 27. quoted above, p. 151, 152.

(*t*) Anton. Med. book vi. sect. 1.

(*u*) See Divine Legation of Moses, Vol. II. p. 186. marg. note, 4th edit.

occur in the writings of the antients. If they are to be taken in the strictest sense, we must suppose them to have held, that no punishment was to be apprehended from God either here or hereafter: and this would in its consequences destroy a Providence, which yet there is good reason to think Cicero, as well as several others of the philosophers, and particularly the Stoics, believed. In the passage above cited from him, he supposes God to be a witness of the oath, and yet not to be an avenger of the perjury, or angry at it; which is certainly a most inconsistent scheme, less defensible than that of Epicurus, who supposed the gods were far removed from our world, and knew nothing of our affairs, nor ever gave themselves the least concern about them. A very learned and ingenious writer has endeavoured to account for this, by supposing that when Cicero represents it as the universal doctrine of the philosophers, that God is never angry, nor hurts any one, it is to be understood of the highest God, who, they supposed, did not concern himself immediately with mankind, but committed the several regions of the universe to the vicegerency and government of inferior deities: and that these have passions and affections, and by them alone, according to their opinion, a particular providence is administered (x). But this, I am afraid, will not solve the difficulty. For in that very passage Cicero speaks not merely of God, but of the gods, "*Ira deorum nulla est*," — "*The gods have no anger*." And it is of the gods that Seneca says, in the passage I have quoted from him, that they neither will nor can hurt any one, nor is any danger to be apprehended from them. And this he, as well as Cicero, supposes to be inseparable from the divine nature,

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(x) Divine Legation of Moses, Vol. II. p. 194.

of which they are all partakers. Besides, if the inferior gods, to whom the administration of things relating to mankind was committed, were supposed to be angry, and to be avengers of the perjury, it would destroy the force of Cicero's argument as here managed: since on this supposition the fear of their anger or of punishment from them, might be supposed to have had an influence to deter Regulus from violating his oath, which Cicero will not allow (*y*). For it is to be observed, that he here all along goes upon the Stoical scheme, that virtue and fidelity is to be preserved for its own sake, without regard to any reward or punishment, but what flows from the nature of the actions themselves.

What increases the difficulty with regard to that passage of Cicero, is, that he represents that maxim that God or the gods are never angry, nor do hurt to any one, as common to all the philosophers, both to the Epicureans who denied a Providence, and to those who owned it. And every one knows, that Epicurus intended by it to free men from all fear of punishment from the gods; and when Cicero joins the other philosophers with the Epicureans, as all agreeing that there is no anger in the gods, it looks

(*y*) In the course of the argument, Cicero takes it for granted, that Jupiter himself, if he had been angry, and had punished Regulus for violating his oath, could not have inflicted a greater punishment upon him, than he brought upon himself by keeping his oath, and returning to the Carthaginians, who put him to a cruel death. This seems to suppose, that it is not in the power of God himself to inflict a greater punishment upon men than they can inflict upon one another: and that temporal and bodily death is the worst any man has to fear from God. This puts his displeasure upon an equal footing with that of an earthly prince; and is very different from the doctrine taught by our Saviour, Luke xii. 4, 5.



as if the one as well as the other maintained, that no punishment is to be feared or apprehended from them. And yet I can hardly bring myself to think, that those philosophers who really believed a Providence, intended by that maxim to signify, that the gods had no displeasure against sin and wickedness, nor ever chastised men on the account of it. Seneca himself, in his 95th epistle, soon after the words above produced from him, saith, "The gods neither cause evil, nor suffer evil: yet they chastise some persons, and restrain them, and lay penalties upon them, and sometimes punish them in a way that looks like doing them hurt."—"Hi nec dant malum, nec habent: cæterùm castigant quosdam et coercent, et irrogant pœnas, et aliquando specie mali puniunt." Where he represents the gods as laying chastisements and coercions upon men, and as sometimes inflicting punishments upon them, which have the appearance of evil. Stobæus gives it as the doctrine of the Stoics, that "since the gods love virtue and its works, and have an aversion to vice and the things which are wrought by it, and sin is the work or effect of vice, it is manifest that all sin is displeasing to the gods, and is an impiety."—*Κατεφαίνεται πᾶν ἀμάρτημα ἀπάρεσθον θεοῖς ὑπαρχον, τὸτο δὲ ἔστιν ἀσεβημα.* It is added, that "a bad man in every sin he commits does something displeasing to the gods."—*Ἀπάρεσθον τι ποιεῖ θεοῖς.* And yet they seem to allow no proper punishments of evil actions from the gods, but what flow from the nature of the evil actions themselves (z).

There is a passage in Plato's *Philebus*, in which he represents the gods as incapable either of rejoicing or the contrary, *ἔτε χαίρειν θεοὺς ἔτε τὸ ἐναντίον* (a). And yet, in his

(z) Stob. Eclog. Ethic. lib. ii. p. 181. edit. Plantin.

(a) Platon. Opera, p. 81.

tenth republic, he represents the good or just man as beloved, and the wicked or unjust man as hated by God or the gods; which surely argues his being pleased or taking a complacency in the one, and having a just displeasure against the other (*b*). And indeed, to say he hateth the wicked, seems to be a stronger expression than to say he is angry at him. The same eminent philosopher mentions it with approbation as an antient tradition, that "justice always accompanies the Deity, and is a punisher of those that transgress the divine law (*c*)."  
 This passage is cited by Plutarch, who seems to approve it. (*d*). And in his treatise *De serâ numinis vindictâ*, he calls God the author or maker of justice, *δικῆς δημιουργον*, and saith, that to him it belongs to determine when, and in what manner, and to what degree, to punish every one of the wicked (*e*).

The people in general had a notion of the divine justice in punishing offenders, and of avenging deities. And in this the poets generally expressed themselves agreeably to the popular sentiments. And as a sense of guilt is apt naturally to create uneasiness and anxious fears, this gave occasion, in the state of darkness and ignorance they were in, to much superstition, and many expedients for averting the displeasure of the gods. The Epicureans pretended an effectual remedy against all this, by denying a Providence, or that the gods take any notice of men or their actions. The other philosophers, who acknowledged a Providence, though they could not deny that vice and wickedness was displeasing to the Deity, yet endeavoured to make themselves and others easy, by making such representations of

(*b*) Platon. *Oper.* p. 518.

(*c*) Ibid. p. 600. G. See the passage cited above, p. 364.

(*d*) Plutarch. *advers. Colot.* tom. II. p. 1124. edit. Xyl.

(*e*) Ibid. p. 550. A.

the Divine Goodness as were not well consistent with rectoral justice. And they carried their notions of God's being never angry, and of his being by nature incapable of doing hurt, so far as in a great measure to take away the fear of punishment. Or if they allowed that God or the gods sometimes inflict punishments upon men in this present state, yet they seem generally to have rejected those of the life to come. It is true, that they could not help acknowledging that it was useful to society that the people should believe them; and accordingly they frequently expressed themselves in a popular way, as if they thought it reasonable to admit, that there are punishments prepared for bad men after death, but at other times they plainly discarded them, and represented all fears of that kind as the effects of superstition; and this, as shall be shewn in the next chapter, came at length to have a very bad effect upon the people themselves. There was therefore great need of a Divine Revelation, to awaken in men a sense of the Divine Justice, and of the dreadful consequences of a life of sin and disobedience. The great usefulness and excellency of the Gospel Revelation appears in this, that not only the future happiness of the righteous is placed in the most glorious light, but the wrath of God is there revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The generality of the people, especially in the politer nations of Greece and Rome, had fallen in a great measure from the belief of a future state before the time of our Saviour's appearing: This is particularly shewn concerning the Greeks, by the testimonies of Socrates and Polybius. The same thing appears with regard to the Romans. Future punishments were disregarded and ridiculed even among the vulgar, who in this fell from the religion of their ancestors. The resurrection of the body rejected by the philosophers of Greece and Rome.

WE have pretty largely considered the sentiments of the philosophers with regard to the immortality of the soul and a future state. And it appears that instead of confirming and establishing the antient traditions concerning it, which had spread very generally among the nations, they greatly weakened and corrupted it. In this as well as other instances, whilst they pretended to an extraordinary penetration above the vulgar, they helped to lead them astray, and subverted some of the most important principles, which lie at the foundation of all religion. Many of them absolutely and avowedly rejected the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments, and treated it with contempt and ridicule. Others talked very waveringly and uncertainly about it. This had a bad influence upon the people, especially in Greece, where they affected to be admirers of wisdom, and to be thought to excel the rest of mankind in knowledge.

What the sentiments of the Athenians were upon this subject, even so early as the time of Socrates, plainly appears from several passages of Plato's *Phædo*. One of Socrates's disciples, Cebes, tells him, that the doctrine he taught concerning the immortality of the soul and a future state, "met with little credit among men." Πολλὴν ἀπιστίαν



παρέχει ἀνθρώποις. That “most men seemed to think that the soul was immediately dissolved at death, and that it vanished and was dissipated, like the wind or smoke, or became nothing at all: and that it needed no small persuasion and faith to believe that the soul exists, and has some power and intelligence after the man is dead (*f*).” Socrates himself had said the same thing just before, that his doctrine was not believed by the generality. Τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀπιστίαν παρέχει. Simmias, another of the dialogists in the *Phædo*, represents it as the opinion of many, that the soul is dissipated when a man dies, and that this is the end of its existence (*g*). And Socrates, speaking of the soul’s being blown away, and perishing with the body, declares, that this was what was said by most men, ὡς φάσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ἄνθρωποι (*h*).

From these testimonies it plainly appears, that the mortality of the soul was a doctrine which prevailed among the Athenians in the time of Socrates, who were looked upon as the most learned and polite of all the Grecians. This shews, that the representations of a future state made in the mysteries had no great effect among the Athenians, in preserving or promoting the belief of a future state, though there were no people who professed a greater veneration for the mysteries than they did, into which they were generally initiated. And indeed those representations were little fitted to beget the solid belief of it in those that attended upon them. A future state was not taught there in grave and serious discourses, so as to instruct the people to form proper notions concerning it, but by shews and representations which might strike the senses, and make some

(*f*) Plato. Opera, p. 380. G, H. et p. 381. A. edit. Lugd.

(*g*) Ibid. p. 384. C.

(*h*) Ibid. p. 385. G.

present impression on the imagination, but were not fitted to enlighten the understanding, and produce a real and lasting conviction in the mind. And there is no great reason to think, that the state of things among the Athenians grew better afterwards, but rather the contrary. Since it was after the days of Socrates, that the Cyrenaics, Cynics, Stoics, arose and flourished, and the wide extended sect of the Epicureans, as well as the several kinds of Sceptics, all of whom either absolutely denied a future state, or represented it as utterly uncertain.

And as to those of the people who believed a future state, and some kind of happiness reserved for good men after death, they seem to have entertained no very encouraging notions of it, and to have had low and mean ideas of that future felicity. Though they represented the condition of good men after death in the lower regions as preferable to that of the wicked, yet they looked upon it to be uncomfortable at best, and that the state of those who continued in life was much more desirable. Thus in Homer's *Odysses*, Achilles (though he was one of the heroic souls) tells Ulysses, who met him in the shades below, that he had rather be a rustic on earth, serving a poor man for hire, and having but scanty fare, than to have a large empire over all the dead. There are other passages of Homer to the same purpose, which make a melancholy representation of the state of the dead in Hades, even those of them that were in Elysium: though he sometimes represents it, as Virgil does afterwards, as a delectable region.

Plato in the beginning of his third Republic, takes notice of several of those passages in Homer, in which the souls in Hades are represented as disconsolate and lamenting their condition. And he finds fault with them on a political account, as tending to weaken men's courage, and make them afraid of death. But the authority of Homer, who was looked upon as a great divine, and in a manner in-

spired, would go farther with the people than that of Plato, whose sublime speculations were comparatively little regarded. And he himself in his *Cratylus*, where he endeavours to give high and honourable thoughts of Pluto and Hades, yet represents it as greatly dreaded by the vulgar, who looked upon it as a dismal and gloomy abode. So that those among the people who believed a future state, could not be properly said to hope for it. It was rather to them an object of dread: and therefore St. Paul justly gives it as the character of the Heathens in general, that they were “without hope (i).”

There is a remarkable passage of Polybius, which shews that the disbelief of a future state was in his time become very common and fashionable, both among persons of superior rank, and among the lower kind of people. That sage author blames the great men and magistrates as very much wanting in true policy, in that, whereas the antients had with great wisdom propagated the belief of a future state, and particularly of future punishments among the multitude, which could scarce be kept in order but by the terror of those punishments; the men of that age inconsiderately and absurdly rejected them, and thereby encouraged the people to despise those terrors. And to this he attributes the great and general want of honesty among the Greeks, and the little regard that was paid to an oath or to their trust (k). The learned bishop of Gloucester, who has quoted that passage at large, makes this just observation upon it, that Polybius ascribes the approaching ruin of the Greeks, and their having fallen from their antient virtue and glory, to “a certain libertinism, which had spread

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(i) Eph. ii. 12. 1 Thess. iv. 13.

(k) Polyb. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 54, 55.

amongst the people of condition, who piqued themselves on a penetration superior to their ancestors and to the people, of regarding, and preposterously teaching others to regard, the restraints of religion as illusory and unmanly (*l*).” And I cannot help observing that Polybius himself, who considers this matter merely as a politician, in that very passage where he blames the great men among the Greeks for encouraging the people to disbelieve and despise future punishments, represents them as no better than useful fictions: and how could it be expected, that the people should be much influenced by notions, which they had reason to think those who proposed them to their belief did not themselves believe?

Polybius indeed, in the passage here referred to, praises the Romans for having acted in this matter much more wisely than the Greeks, and shewing a greater regard to religion, which, he observes, had a good effect upon the morals of the people. And it is true, that in the antient and most virtuous times of the Roman republic, the doctrine of a future state, and particularly of future punishments, seems to have been generally received and believed among the people. But afterwards this doctrine fell into discredit, and was despised in the more learned and civilized, but dissolute ages of the Roman state, when they became abandoned to vice and licentiousness. In proportion as the Greek learning and philosophy made a progress among the Romans, the antient traditionary belief of future rewards and punishments was rejected. How much the disbelief of future retributions prevailed among the great men and gentlemen at Rome appears from what Cæsar said in full

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(*l*) Div. Leg. Vol. II. book iii. sect. 1. p. 79, 80, 81. 4th edit.



senate in his speech on occasion of Catiline's conspiracy, where he openly declares, "to those that live in sorrow and misery, death is a repose from their calamities, not a torment: that it puts an end to all the evils mortals are subject to: and that beyond it there is no place left for anguish or joy." "In luctu atque miseriis mortem ærumnarum requiem, non cruciatum esse; eam cuncta mortalium mala dissolvere: ultra neque curæ neque gaudio locum esse (*m*)."

Here he probably expresses the general sentiments of the Roman gentlemen at that time, as well as his own; or else he would not have delivered himself thus on that occasion, when it was his interest not to say any thing which might give offence to his hearers (*n*). Cato, in his celebrated speech in answer to Cæsar, slightly passes over what he had said against a future state, with only insinuating, that "Cæsar looked upon those things to be fables, which are related concerning the Inferi, where bad men, far from the mansions of the virtuous, are confined to dreary abodes, abominable and full of horrors." "Cæsar bene et compositè

(*m*) Apud Sallust. Bel. Catilin. cap. 51.

(*n*) That this continued to be the prevailing opinion among the gentlemen of Rome, may be gathered from what Pliny the famous naturalist, who lived a considerable time after Cæsar, confidently pronounces. "All men are in the same condition after their last day as before their first; nor have they any more sense either in body or soul after they are dead, than before they were born." "Omnibus à supremo die eadem quæ ante primum; nec magis à morte sensus ullus, aut corporis aut animæ, quam ante natalem." And in what follows, he endeavours to expose the absurdity of that opinion which attributes immortality to the soul: and says, "these are childish and senseless fictions of mortals, who are ambitious of a never-ending existence."—"Puerilium ista deliramentorum, avidæque nunquam desinere mortalitatis commenta sunt." Hist. Nat. lib. vii. cap. 55.

paulo ante in hoc ordine de vitâ et morte disseruit, credo, falsa existumans ea quæ de Inferis memorantur, diverso itinere malos à bonis loca tetra, inculta, fœda, atque formidolosa habere (o)." And Cicero in his fourth oration against Catiline, spoken on the same occasion, says "That in order to deter wicked men, the antients would have it believed, that punishments were prepared for the impious in the infernal regions, that they might be under the influence of fear in this life, because they were sensible, that if these were taken away death itself was not to be dreaded." "Itaque ut aliqua in vitâ formido improbis esset posita, apud inferos ejusmodi quædam illi antiqui supplicia impiis constituta esse voluerunt: quod videlicet intelligebant, his remotis, non esse mortem ipsam pertimescendam (p)." It is observable that both Cato and Cicero mention the doctrine of future punishments as held by the antients; but neither of them charge Cæsar with falsehood or with impiety in denying it: nor does either of them attempt to prove the truth of that doctrine, or offer any arguments to support it. And indeed Cato, who was a rigid Stoic, if he followed the opinions of his sect, could lay little stress on future punishments, which they generally discarded. And it appears from several passages before produced, that Cicero looked upon them to be vain and groundless terrors. What Cæsar said in the senate, Cicero declared more fully in an assembly of the Roman people: which he would not have done, if he had not known that this was the opinion which generally prevailed among the people at that time (q).

It has been already observed, that in his first book of the

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(o) Sallust. ubi supra, cap. 52.

(p) Orat. in Catilin. 4to. sect. 4.

(q) See here above, p. 371.

Tusculan Disputations, where he argues for the immortality of the soul; he represents the stories of future punishments as what scarce any body believed at Rome. To which may be added what he says in the person of Balbus in his second book of the Nature of the Gods, "what old woman can be found so senseless, as to be afraid of the monstrous things in the infernal regions, which were antiently believed?" "*Quæ anus tam excors inveniri potest, quæ illa, quæ quondam credebantur, apud inferos portenta extimescat (r)?*" Juvenal, who, like the other poets, generally speaks agreeably to the popular sentiments, says the same thing, and represents the antient accounts of the infernal regions as universally despised and disbelieved even by the meanest of the people.

"Esse aliquos manes, et subterranea regna,  
Et contum, et Stygio ranas in gurgite nigras,  
Atque unâ transire vadum tot millia cymbâ  
Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum ære lavantur (s)."

Sextus Empiricus indeed pretends that there was as general a consent in believing the poetic fables of hell, as in believing the being of a God (*t*). But that famous sceptic does not represent this matter fairly. He says it only with a view to weaken the argument for the existence of a Deity drawn from the general consent of nations concerning it. For the testimonies which have been produced plainly shew, that at the time when he writ, the stories about the Inferi met with very little credit in the world.

I would observe by the way, that the poetical representations of a future state, especially those relating to future

(*r*) De Nat. Deor. lib. ii. cap. 2.

(*s*) Juven. Satyr. II. lin. 149. et seq.

(*t*) Advers. Physic. lib. viii. cap. 2.

punishments, were in effect the same that were made use of in the mysteries, and which, I have shewn, were then little regarded even among the people. It is true, that Celsus in a passage cited before, pretends that the doctrine of future punishments was equally taught among the Pagans as among the Christians, especially by those who were the interpreters of the sacred rites, and the mystagogues, who initiated persons into the mysteries, or presided in them. But then in what follows he supposes, that though both the mystagogues and the Christians taught future punishments, yet they differed in their accounts of them; and that the question was, which of their accounts were truest. Origen in his reflections on this passage observes, that it is reasonable to think, that they had the truth on their side, whose doctrine on this head had such an influence on their hearers, that they lived as if they were persuaded of the truth of it: that the Jews and Christians are mightily affected with the persuasion they have of the future rewards of good men, and punishments of the wicked. But, says he, "let Celsus, or any other man that pleases, shew any persons who have been wrought upon by the terrors of the eternal punishments as represented by the mystagogues:" where he intimates, that the mysteries had very little effect, and made small impressions on the minds of men (*u*). And he elsewhere observes, that Celsus thought, that the Christians only feigned the things they taught concerning a future state, to fill the vulgar with amazement, and did not declare the truth; and compares them with those who in the Bacchanalian mysteries produced τὰ φάσματα καὶ δεινὰτα, spectres and terrible appearances; where Celsus seems plainly to intimate that the representations made of these things in the mysteries were

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(*u*) Origen cont. Cels. lib. viii. p. 408, 409. edit. Spenser.



only fictions designed to frighten the people, and had no foundation in truth (*x*). To which Origen answers, whether what is said concerning the Bacchanalian mysteries be credible or not, let the Greeks declare: the Christians are only concerned to defend their own doctrines.

Strabo, an author justly esteemed, who flourished under the reign of the emperor Augustus, saith of the Indian Brachmans, that they composed fables, like Plato, concerning the immortality of the soul, and the judgments of Hades; where he seems to pronounce all these things to be only fables and fictions (*y*). Plutarch, who lived some time after the coming of our Saviour, in his treatise, which is designed to prove, That it is not possible so live pleasurably according to the tenets of Epicurus, observes, that the vulgar, οἱ πολλοί, the most of mankind, were ready to admit, what he calls “the fabulous hope of immortality, but that they had no fear of the punishments said to be in Hades,”—ἀνευ φόβου περὶ τῶν ἐν αἴδου (*z*). And again he says, “there are not many that fear these things:” and he treats them as fabulous relations, and the tales of mothers and nurses (*a*). The same author, in his tract *De serâ Numinis vindictâ*, having said that during this life the soul is in a conflict, and when that is over receives according to its deserts, adds “but what rewards or punishments the soul being alone [i. e. separated from the body] receives for the things done in the past life, are nothing to us, who are alive, but are disbelieved, and hid from us,”—ἐδὲν εἰσι πρὸς ἡμᾶς ζῶντας, ἀλλ’ ἀπίστανται καὶ λανθάνουσιν. Where he shews that in his days the rewards and punishments of a future state were little regarded or

(*x*) Orig. contra Cels. lib. iv. p. 167.

(*y*) Strab. lib. xv.

(*z*) Plutarch. Oper. tom. II. p. 1104. C. edit. Xyl.

(*a*) Ibid. tom. II. p. 1105. B. edit. Xyl.

believed by the generality of the Heathens, and were looked upon as things that did not concern them. And the truth is, that in the Pagan theology, provided a man were diligent in observing the established rites of worship, towards the popular deities, he might pass for a religious man, though he believed nothing at all of the world to come. But no sooner did they embrace Christianity, but it wrought in them the most firm and solid persuasion of a future state of rewards and punishments, which neither their boasted mysteries, nor the writings of their ablest philosophers, were able to effect before.

I have hitherto taken little notice of the writings of the poets. There are several passages in them, which proceed upon the supposition of the rewards and punishments of a future state. And something of this kind made a part of the poetical machinery; yet they express themselves on several occasions, as if they thought death brought an utter extinction of being, and took away all sense of evil. Plutarch, in his Consolation to Apollonius, quotes this passage of an antient poet, that no grief or evil touches the dead,

"Αλγος γὰρ ὄντως ἐδὲν ἀπῆται νεκρῶ.

He there also cites another passage from a poet, signifying that the dead man is in the same condition he was in before he was born (*b*). Stobæus ascribes the first of these passages to Æschylus. There are passages of the same kind in Epicharmus, in Sophocles, Euripides, and Astydamas, referred to by the learned Dr. Whitby, who all, says he, agree in this, that the dead are sensible of no grief or evil (*c*).

As to the Roman poets, I need not mention the famous

(a) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 109. E.

(c) Whitby's Commentary on 2 Tim. i. 10.

Lucretius, who published a system of Epicureanism which he endeavoured to recommend to his countrymen, by all the charms of poetry, and particularly extolled his philosophical hero for freeing men from the dread of punishments after death. And it is well known, that both the Greek and Roman poets draw arguments from this consideration, that life is short, and death shall put an utter end to our existence; to urge men to lay hold on the present opportunity for giving a full indulgence to their appetites, according to that libertine maxim, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Several passages of this kind might be produced from Strato and others of the Greeks. To the same purpose is that noted passage of Catullus,

"Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus  
Soles occidere et redire possunt:  
Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,  
Nox est perpetua una dormienda."

And Horace,

"Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam  
Jam nox te premet fabulæque Manes."

Lib. I. Ode iv. 15.

See also lib. i. Ode 11. and other passages of the same kind. Persius also represents it as the language of many in his time,

"Indulge genio: carpeamus dulcia: nostrum est  
Quod vivis: cinis et Manes et fabula fiet."

Satyr. v. 151, 152.

I shall only add one passage more from Seneca the Tragedian,

"Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil—  
Quæris quo jaceas post obitum loco,  
Quo non nata jacent."

I would conclude with observing, that as to the resurrection of the body, neither the philosophers nor the vulgar

among the Greeks and Romans seem to have had any notion of it. When St. Paul in his excellent discourse to the Athenians spoke of the resurrection of the dead, we are told his hearers mocked or treated it with contempt, as a strange doctrine which they had never heard of before (*d*). The Epicureans and Stoics are particularly mentioned. But it was equally true of all the other sects of philosophers. Those who argued most for the immortality of the soul, as the Pythagoreans and Platonists, held the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in contempt. And this indeed flowed from the principles of their philosophy. For they looked upon the body to be the prison and sepulchre of the soul, into which it was sent down by way of punishment for sins committed in a former state: that the happiness of the soul consisted in its being loosed and disengaged from the body: and that a resurrection of the body, or the soul's being again united to it, if it were possible, was far from being a desirable thing. Celsus calls it the hope of worms, a very filthy and abominable, as well as an impossible thing: and that it is what God neither can nor will do, as being base and contrary to nature (*e*). But it is to be observed, that the latter Platonists and Pythagoreans, after Christianity appeared, supposed that purified souls after their departure from the body were invested with shining, agile, celestial bodies, pretty nearly answering St. Paul's description of the risen bodies of the saints, in the noble account he gives of the change which shall pass upon them at the resurrection. And it is very probable, that, in this as well as other instances, they improved their notions from the Gospel discoveries, though

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(*d*) Acts xvii. 18. 20. 32.

(*e*) Orig. cont. Cels. lib. v. p. 240.



being no friends to Christianity, they were unwilling to acknowledge the obligation. See Dr. Whitby, in his Annotations on 1 Cor. xv. 44.

It is said, indeed, that there were some notion of the resurrection of the body among the antient Persians. And some think that to this Diogenes Laertius has a reference, when he gives it as a part of the doctrine of the antient Magi, ἀναζιώσασθαι τὰς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ ἔσσεσθαι ἀθάνατους.—“That men shall live again, and be immortal (*f*).” And it is not improbable, that some notion of the resurrection of the body might have been part of the original tradition, derived along with the notion of the immortality of the soul from the first ages. That it obtained among the Jews a considerable time before the coming of our Saviour, appears from the account given us of Eleazar, and of the mother and her seven sons, who were put to the most cruel torments for their religion under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, and who comforted themselves with the hopes that God would raise them from the dead (*g*). And to this the sacred writer of the epistle to the Hebrews probably refers, when he speaks of the good men in former times, who “were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection (*h*).” From several passages in the New Testament it is evident, that this was a doctrine generally received among the Jews, at the time of the first publishing of the Gospel, except by the Sadducees, who for that reason had an ill character among the people. But the notions the Jews generally entertained of the resurrection seem to have been very gross, as is manifest from

(*f*) Laert. in Proœm. segm. 9.

(*g*) 2 Maccab. chap. vi. and vii.

(*h*) Heb. xi. 35.

the objection of the Sadducees against it, and which they were at a loss how to answer, till our Saviour taught them to form more just and sublime notions concerning it.

If therefore we suppose some notion of the resurrection of the body to have been communicated to mankind in the first ages, it became soon corrupted and obscured. And some learned persons have supposed, that the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which became very general, was a corruption and depravation of that doctrine, and at length greatly contributed to destroy the true notion of it.

Perhaps also it was owing to a corruption of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, that in many parts of the world, where they held a life after this, the notion they had of it seems to have been this, that it shall be a life perfectly like the present, with the same bodily wants, the same exercises and employments, and the same enjoyments and pleasures, which they had here. Hence it was that among some nations it was customary for the women, the slaves, the subjects or friends of the deceased, to kill themselves, that in the other world they might serve those whom they loved and respected in this. Such was the practice among the antient Danes, as Bartholinus informs us, in his *Danish Antiquities*. Thus also it still is in Japan, Macassar, and other places. It is said to be a custom in Guinea, that when a king dies many are slain, and their bloody carcases buried him, that they may again live with him in the other world (*i*). It was formerly a well known custom in the East Indies for women to kill themselves after the death of their husbands, that they might accompany them in the next life. And so lately as in the year 1710,

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(*i*) *English acquisitions in Guinea*, p. 22.

when the prince of Morava on the coast of Coromandel died, aged above eighty years, his wives, to the number of forty-seven, were burned with his corpse (*k*). We are told also, that in Terra Firma in America, when any of their casiques dies, his chief servants, men and women, kill themselves to serve him in the other world, and they bury with them maize and other provisions for their subsistence (*l*). And it is said concerning the disciples of Foe in China, that some of them, when they meet with obstacles to their passions, go together to hang or drown themselves, that when they rise together again, they may become husband and wife (*m*).

Mons. de Montesquieu, who mentions some of these things, is of opinion, that this flows not so much from a belief of the immortality of the soul, as of the resurrection of the body: from whence they drew this consequence, that after their death men would have the same sentiments, necessities, and passions as now. I do not deny but this might have been occasioned by an abuse or misunderstanding of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. But it does not necessarily follow, that they believed the same body that died would rise again, though probably they thought the soul would have bodies of the like kind, or corporeal vehicles, which would have the same wants, necessities and enjoyments, as they have at present. But the remark which that celebrated author makes upon the whole

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(*k*) There is a particular account of this in a letter from F. Martin to F. de Villette, who were both of them missionaries in that country. Concerning which, see Millar's History of the Propagation of Christianity, Vol. II. p. 154, 155.

(*l*) Perrier's Collection of Voyages, p. 194.

(*m*) See a tract of a Chinese philosopher in Du Halde's History of China, Vol. III. p. 272. English Translation.

is very judicious. "That it is not sufficient that religion should establish the doctrine of a future state, but it should also direct to a proper use of it: and that this is admirably done by the Christian religion. The doctrine of a future state is there represented as the object of faith, and not of sense or knowledge: and even the resurrection of the body, as there taught, leads to spiritual ideas (*n*).” How admirably our Saviour and his apostles, who writ under the direction of his Spirit, have provided against the abuse of the doctrine of the resurrection, and what noble ideas they have given of it, will be evident to any one that impartially considers what is said of it by our blessed Lord, Luke xx. 35, 36. and by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. from the 42d verse to the end; and 1 Thess. iv. 13—18.

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(*n*) L'Esprit de Loix, Vol. II. livre xxiv. chap. 19. p. 167. edit. Edinb.



## CHAPTER IX.

Our Lord Jesus Christ brought life and immortality into the most clear and open light by the Gospel. He both gave the fullest assurance of that everlasting happiness which is prepared for good men in a future state, and made the most inviting discoveries of the nature and greatness of that happiness. The Gospel also contains express declarations concerning the punishment which shall be inflicted upon the wicked in a future state. The necessity and importance of this part of the Gospel Revelation shewn. The Conclusion, with some general reflections upon the whole.

**FROM** the account which hath been given of the state of the Heathen world, with respect to the belief of a state of future rewards and punishments, it appears, that some notion of this obtained among the nations from the remotest antiquity: that the most eminent Pagan writers represent it as a tradition, which obtained long before the ages of learning and philosophy, and which was regarded as of divine original: that in process of time, this tradition became greatly corrupted, and was mixed with fables and fictions by the poets and mythologists, and by the legislators and civil magistrates too, with a view to adapt it to the gross imaginations of the people, and to serve political purposes, and the interests of society and government: that afterwards, when the philosophers arose, who pretended to an extraordinary penetration above the vulgar, and to examine every thing by the rules of strict reasoning, they in this as well as other instances, corrupted the antient traditions, and for the most part rejected the immortality of the soul, and a state of rewards and punishments: that those of them who professed to believe it, the chief of whom were the Pythagoreans and Platonists, generally placed it on wrong foundations, and argued for it from principles which were either false or not to be depended upon: that

those who sometimes expressed themselves strongly in favour of the immortality of the soul and a future state, at other times said things which seem to be inconsistent with that belief: or, if they really believed it, they did not pretend to a certainty, and frequently spoke of it in a way which shewed they had not attained to a satisfying conviction concerning it: that their doctrine of future rewards was so managed as to yield little comfort and encouragement to the generality of good and virtuous persons; and if they sometimes said high things of that future happiness, it related chiefly to some eminent and privileged souls, such as legislators, heroes, and philosophers, and those who distinguished themselves by public services, and by their bravery in war: that as to future punishments, though they were sensible that it was useful to society to have them believed, yet they generally rejected them, and advanced such notions of the Divine Goodness, as left little room for punishments in a future state; and they frequently treated all fears of any evil after death as the effects of a vain and foolish superstition.

This account of the sentiments of the antient philosophers, especially those of Greece and Rome, with regard to a future state, is far from coming up to the high idea many have conceived of them; but that it is not a wrong charge, has, I think, been sufficiently shewn in the foregoing part of this treatise. And though some remains of the antient traditions concerning a future state of retributions were still to be found among the people, yet they were in a great measure worn away, and had lost their force and influence, even among the vulgar Pagans, about the time when the Gospel was published to the world.

As to the Jews, we have the testimony of our blessed Lord himself, and of the sacred writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, that the doctrine of a future state was an article of the religion of the antient patriarchs, the an-

cestors of their nation (o). And though there is no express mention of a future happiness among the promises of the law of Moses, taken in the literal sense, yet that the belief of a future state obtained among that people, appears to me for several reasons highly probable; but their notions of it seem to have been mixed with much obscurity. There was a considerable sect among them at the time of our Saviour's coming, viz. the Sadducees, who professed a strict adherence to the law of Moses, and yet denied a future state. And though the body of the Jewish nation believed, they entertained very imperfect and gross notions of that future felicity, and particularly of the resurrection of the body.

In these circumstances it pleased God in his great wisdom and goodness to grant a new Revelation of his will to mankind, in which as he made the clearest discoveries of his own glorious perfections and governing providence, to lead men to the right knowledge and adoration of him the only true God, and gave them the most holy and excellent precepts to guide them in the practice of universal righteousness and virtue; so the more effectually to animate them to their duty, he hath given them the most express and certain assurances of eternal life, as the reward of their sincere and persevering, though not absolutely perfect, obedience. We are not left merely to collect it by deductions and inferences, which, however just, are apt to leave the mind in doubt and uncertainty, but it is clearly and directly revealed in the most plain and explicit terms possible, and which admit of no ambiguity or evasion. I need not insist upon the proof of this to any that have the least acquaintance with the New Testament. It is well known that these sacred writings every where abound with

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(o) Matt. xxii. 29. 31, 32. Heb. xi. 9, 10. 13. 15. 16.

the most strong and positive declarations concerning a future everlasting glory and blessedness prepared for the good and righteous. And accordingly one chief design of the Gospel Revelation is to teach men to rise in their thoughts, affections, and views, above this vain and transitory world, to that future heavenly state, to fit and prepare them for it, and to engage them to act as the heirs and expectants of a blessed immortality. This is the proper characteristic and distinguishing glory of the religion of Jesus. We have now as much certainty of that eternal life, as we can reasonably expect, till we ourselves are so happy as to be admitted to the actual possession and enjoyment of it. For we are assured of it by the express word and promise of God himself, brought to us by the most credible and illustrious messenger that could be sent from heaven to mankind, "even the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," who came "from his bosom to declare him to us," and who is justly called the "Amen, the faithful and true Witness (*p*)."<sup>1</sup> All the attestations which were given to his divine mission, which were as great as could reasonably be expected or desired (*q*), may also be regarded as divine attestations to the truth of the doctrine he taught in his heavenly Father's name, and especially of the doctrine of eternal life, which was the main scope and ultimate design of the revelations he brought. His testimony therefore concerning it is the testimony of God himself.

(*p*) John i. 14. 18. Rev. iii. 14. 'And what adds a peculiar force to his testimony is, that he is not only the publisher, but is constituted by the Divine Wisdom and Grace, the Author and Giver of that eternal life to them that obey him; as having done and suffered all that was required of him, in order to our redemption and salvation. See Heb. v. 9. 12. John vi. x. xvii.

(*q*) See concerning this the first volume of this work, in the last chapter.



“I have not spoken of myself (saith he) but the Father which hath sent me, he gave me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting (r).”

But that which gave the most glorious attestation both to his divine mission in general, and particularly to the truth of the doctrine concerning the resurrection of the dead and eternal life, was his own rising again from the dead, as he himself had promised and foretold. “He shewed himself alive after his passion,” to his apostles and other unexceptionable witnesses, by “many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (s).” And as a farther proof of his resurrection and exaltation, he poured forth upon them, according to his promise, his holy spirit from on high, by which they were endued with extraordinary gifts and powers, and were enabled to preach the Gospel among the nations, in the name of a crucified and risen Saviour: “God bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will (t).” And eternal life was a principal article of the Gospel they preached: “This is the record (saith St. John) that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son (u).”

As our Lord Jesus Christ hath assured us of the certainty, so he hath also made far clearer and fuller discoveries of the nature and greatness of that future happiness than the world was ever favoured with before.

It is not only represented to us as a state of rest, in

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(r) John xii. 49.

(s) Acts i. 3.

(t) Heb. ii. 4.

(u) 1 John v. 11.

which good men shall be absolutely exempted from all the evils and sorrows to which they are now obnoxious (*x*); but as including the full perfection of our nature, in the enjoyment of all that good which is necessary to our complete felicity. The “spirits of just men shall then be made perfect (*y*).” They shall be enlightened with divine knowledge. We now “know in part (saith St. Paul) but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away (*z*).” And he there represents our present high attainments in knowledge, as no better in comparison than the crude imperfect ideas of a child, compared with the knowledge of a man arrived to a full maturity of reason. But what is especially to be considered is, that the souls of the righteous shall then be made perfect in holiness, goodness, and purity, which is the highest glory and excellence of the reasonable nature; and not only shall their souls be raised to a high degree of perfection in that future state, but their bodies too. Man is in his original constitution an embodied spirit. Though the rational soul is the noblest part of our nature, yet it is not the whole of it. Nor could the whole man be properly said to be made perfect in bliss, if the body, which was from the beginning a constituent part of his frame, in which he lived and acted during his abode on earth, were left utterly to perish in the grave. Eternal life, therefore, as it signifies the happiness of our entire nature, takes in not merely the immortality of the soul, when separated from the body, but the resurrection of the body too, and the immortal existence of the whole man, body and soul united, in a state of feli-

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(*x*) Heb. iv. 9. Rev. xxi. 4.

(*y*) Heb. xii. 23.

(*z*) 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 11.

city and perfection. And of this our Lord Jesus Christ hath given us the fullest and most satisfying assurance.

The Jews, as was before observed, at the time of our Saviour's coming, generally professed to believe the resurrection of the body: but their notions of it seem for the most part to have been very rude and gross. Our Lord therefore takes occasion to raise them to more just and sublime conceptions of it. He declares, in answer to the objections of the Sadducees, That "the children of this world marry, and are given in marriage, but they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: neither shall they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection (a)." And elsewhere, to signify the wonderful splendor with which their glorified bodies shall be arrayed, he saith, "The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father (b)." In like manner St. Paul, speaking of the difference between our bodies in this present state, and what they shall be at the resurrection of the dead, saith, That the body which was "sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption; it was sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory; it was sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power; it was sown a natural (or animal) body, it shall be raised a spiritual body (c)." And again, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality: so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass this saying that is written, death is swal-

(a) Luke xx. 34, 35, 36.

(b) Matt. xiii. 43.

(c) 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

lowed up in victory (*d*).” The same apostle afterwards assures us, That “Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (*e*).”

To heighten our ideas of the felicity prepared for good men in the heavenly state, the place of their residence is represented as very beautiful and glorious. It is described by metaphors drawn from those things which are accounted most splendid and magnificent here on earth: but to shew that it is to be understood in a higher sense, far transcending the glory of this world, it is declared, that the heavenly city “hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it. For the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb,” by which we are to understand our glorified Redeemer, “is the light thereof (*f*).”

It is further signified, that as they shall be placed in delightful mansions, so they shall be engaged in the happiest exercises and enjoyments, such as shall be every way suited to their perfected natures. They shall be admitted to the blissful and improving society of holy and glorious “angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect,” and shall make a part of the “general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven (*g*),” all united in holy love and concord, continually giving and receiving mutual unspeakable satisfaction and joy.

But the Gospel raiseth our ideas of the heavenly felicity higher still, by assuring us that we shall then be admitted to the beatific vision and fruition of God himself. “Blessed

(*d*) 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54.

(*e*) Phil. iii. 21.

(*f*) Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

(*g*) Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.



are the pure in heart (saith our Saviour) for they shall see God (*h*).” Though we cannot pretend distinctly and fully to explain what is to be understood by this expression of seeing God, yet this we may be sure of, that it signifies that we shall then be admitted to a far clearer and more immediate knowledge and intuition of the divine glory and perfections, than we are capable of attaining to here on earth. “Now we see through a glass darkly (as St. Paul speaks) but then face to face: now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known (*i*).” It is such a vision as shall fill us with the highest satisfaction and delight, and shall have a transforming influence upon us. “We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.” We shall “behold his face in righteousness,” so as to be “satisfied with his likeness (*k*).”

It is also mentioned as a delightful ingredient in the heavenly felicity, that there we shall be with Christ the great Saviour and Lover of our natures, who hath redeemed us unto God by his blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and family, and nation, the Captain of our Salvation, appointed by the Divine Wisdom and Goodness to bring many sons unto glory. We shall rejoice in him and the wonders of his love, and shall with unspeakable satisfaction behold his glory, and be sharers in it (*l*).

And now, upon the whole, what a noble idea does the Gospel give us of the happiness prepared for good men in the heavenly state! It appears from the account which is there given of it to be a state of wonderful splendor and glory, of consummate bliss and joy, and of perfect purity

(*h*) Matt. v. 8.

(*i*) 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Psal. xvi. 11. xvii. 15.

(*k*) 1 John iii. 2. Psal. xvi. 11. xvii. 15.

(*l*) John xiv. 3. xvii. 24. Rev. iii. 21.

and holiness. And it deserves particular notice, that though the mansions of the blessed in heaven are sometimes described by images and representations drawn from sensible and worldly objects, yet there is nothing which intrenches in the least on the rules of the strictest purity. None of the impure delights of a Mahometan paradise, and which were artfully contrived to please those who place their happiness in sensual gratifications, enter into the description of the Gospel felicity. It is a happiness prepared for the "pure in heart." It is "the inheritance of the saints in light," or "of them that are sanctified (*m*)."  
We are told, that it is "unto them that by a patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality," that God will give "eternal life (*n*)."  
And that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord (*o*)."  
And that into that heavenly Jerusalem "there shall in nowise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie (*p*)."  
All the exercises, all the enjoyments, are pure and holy, and the blessed above are continually employed in praising and serving God, and in doing his will.

The last thing to be observed concerning that future happiness is, that it shall be unchangeable, and of everlasting duration. Hence it is so often described to us under the notion of eternal life. They that are admitted to that heavenly felicity, shall not be put upon any new hazards or states of trial. They shall be raised for ever above all fear of change, or of losing their happiness, and shall be kept through the mighty power and goodness of God, who

(*m*) Matt. v. 8. Col. i. 12. Acts xxvi. 18.

(*n*) Rom. ii. 7.

(*o*) Heb. xii. 14.

(*p*) Rev. vii. 15. xxii. 3. compared with Psal. ciii. 20, 21. Matt. vi. 10.

shall maintain and preserve them in their holy and happy state to all eternity:

This happiness shall commence with regard to the souls of the righteous, in a lower degree, immediately upon their departure out of the body. This seems to be plainly intimated by our Saviour, when he saith concerning Lazarus, that "he died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom," a state of rest and joy (*q*). So he promised the penitent thief, that he should "that day," i. e. the day of his death, "be with him in paradise (*r*)."  
And dying Stephen prayed to the Lord Jesus "to receive his spirit," i. e. to be with him in bliss and glory (*s*). St. Paul saith concerning himself, "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ:" intimating the desire and hope he had that he should be with Christ, when he departed out of this present life (*t*). And to the same purpose, after having said, that whilst "we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord," he declares in his own name, and that of all true Christians, "we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (*u*)."  
Where it is intimated, that when the souls of good men are absent from the body, and consequently while they are in the separate state before their being reunited to their bodies at the resurrection, they are "present with the Lord," present in such a manner, that the nearest communion with him they are admitted to have on earth, may be regarded as comparatively a state of absence from the Lord. Yet notwithstanding this, it is not till the

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(*q*) Luke xvi. 22.

(*r*) Luke xxiii. 43.

(*s*) Acts vii. 59.

(*t*) Phil. i. 23.

(*u*) 2 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8.

general resurrection, that the happiness of the righteous shall be completed. It is at the time of Christ's glorious appearing, that the dead shall be raised, and their entire nature consummated in bliss. And there is something inexpressibly noble and sublime in the account which is given us of the glory of that day, when the saints shall be put in full possession of their heavenly inheritance, and so shall continue to all eternity.

Any one that impartially considers this account of future happiness brought to us by the Revelation of Jesus Christ, will see the greatest reason to adore the Divine Goodness, which hath favoured us with such glorious discoveries. There is nothing in this account, when once it is revealed, but what is worthy of God, and what right reason duly exercised will approve, yet it is what it could not have discovered with any certainty by its own unassisted force. Men of fine imaginations might form pleasing conjectures concerning the happiness of a future state, in some instances nearly resembling the accounts given in the Gospel, but they could at best have passed for no more than agreeable visions of fancy, which could nor yield any solid assurance or conviction to the mind. And indeed, how could any man pretend, by the force of his own reason, without the assistance of Divine Revelation, to explore the secrets of the invisible world, or take upon him to determine with certainty, in what manner or degree the Supreme Lord of the universe will, in a future state, reward the sincere though imperfect obedience of his frail creatures here on earth? This depends upon the councils of his own infinite wisdom, and unobliged grace and goodness, which such short-sighted creatures as we are cannot pretend certainly to know, except he himself should declare his will and purpose concerning it.

No doubt the goodness of God, of which there are many proofs in the course of his providence in this present



world, might administer grounds of comfort on supposition of a future state. But then it is not his goodness alone which is to be considered, but his wisdom and governing justice too. Let us suppose him never so good, yet if we believe him to be also perfectly wise and just, and to have a sacred regard to the authority of his government and laws, and are at the same time sensible that we have in many instances transgressed his holy laws, and acted contrary to the duty he requireth of us, might we not have just reason to apprehend the awful effects of his righteous displeasure? Or, to make the most favourable supposition, upon what ground could we hope that he would raise us to a complete eternal felicity in a future state, as the reward of our imperfect obedience in this, when we could not have pretended to lay claim to such a reward as strictly due to us in a way of merit, even though we had perfectly obeyed, and never in any one instance fallen short of our duty? But if it should please God to make an express declaration of his gracious purpose to pardon all our iniquities, upon our turning to him by a true repentance and humble faith, and to crown our sincere persevering obedience, though not absolutely sinless, or free from failures and defects, with the glorious reward of eternal life, this would lay a just foundation for a divine hope and joy. And this is our unspeakable comfort and privilege under the Gospel Revelation.

And what mightily recommends the discoveries there made to us of future rewards, is, that they are not confined to a few persons of distinguished eminence. The Gospel-promises extend to all righteous, holy, and virtuous persons of whatsoever condition or degree, of whatsoever tribe or tongue, or family or nation. It is true, that it is plainly intimated in the New Testament, that there shall be different degrees of glory among the blessed above, in a wise and fit proportion to the different degrees of their

holiness and usefulness here on earth (*x*). But yet the happiness shall be complete in all, according to their different measures and degrees; all shall be perfectly pleased and satisfied, and admitted to those holy beatifying exercises and enjoyments, which tend to the true felicity of their nature. Our Saviour declares concerning all the "righteous" in general, that they shall "go into life eternal (*y*)."  
We are assured, that unto them that by a "patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality," whatever their outward condition and circumstances may be here on earth, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, God will give eternal life.—  
Glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile (*z*)."  
Thus our Saviour in the parable represents Lazarus, who was a good man, but reduced to the lowest degree of poverty, as carried at his death by angels into Abraham's bosom (*a*).  
And St. James tells us, that "God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath prepared for them that love him (*b*)."  
Christ is said to be the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (*c*). Not the meanest of the human race shall be excluded from that heavenly felicity, if they go on in the practice of real piety and virtue, and serve God with simplicity and godly sincerity, in the station and circumstances in which his providence hath placed them.

(*x*) Luke xix. 16—20.

(*y*) Matt. xxv. 46.

(*z*) Rom. ii. 2. 10.

(*a*) Luke xvi. 22.

(*b*) Jam. ii. 5.

(*c*) Heb. v. 9.

And now how justly may it be said, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel! And what a glorious scene doth this open to us! What a source of spiritual and divine joy, amidst all the adversities and tribulations of this present state! For the “sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (d)!” It hath also a manifest tendency to form us to a true greatness of mind, a noble and god-like temper. He that has a stedfast hope of that future glory and happiness, will be able to look down with a superior contempt on all those short lived worldly advantages which are the usual objects of ambition and avarice, and by which men are so often tempted to act contrary to the rules of truth and justice, generous honesty and fidelity. The impure allurements of sensual pleasure will have but small influence upon him that has such glorious hopes and views. Nor will the fear of reproaches, persecutions, pain, and death, be able to deter him from his duty.

In sum, nothing can have a greater tendency than the Gospel-promise of eternal life, where it is heartily believed and duly considered, to animate us to a persevering constancy and progress in the ways of holiness and virtue, notwithstanding the difficulties and discouragements we may meet with in this present state. It is far from arguing a mean and mercenary temper to have such a reward in view, as the Gospel represents that future happiness to be. On the contrary, to aspire after it, is to aspire to the true perfection of our nature, to a state of consummate goodness and purity, and to the nearest conformity to God himself, the supreme original excellence. It may therefore be justly said,

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(d) Rom. viii. 18.

that the discovery that is made to us in the Gospel of a blessed immortality, and of the way that leads to it, and the terms upon which it is to be obtained, is of such vast importance, that all the wealth of this world is not to be compared with it.

But it is proper farther to observe, that the doctrine of a future state includes not only that of future rewards, or the happiness prepared for good men in the world to come; but of the punishments which shall be inflicted upon the wicked. And indeed the latter seem no less necessary in the course of the divine administrations than the former. What confusion and disorder would follow, if vice and wickedness were suffered to ravage without controul? To what purpose would it be to make laws, if those laws were left without authority? And what authority could laws have without sanctions of punishments against the transgressors? To say, with some of the antient philosophers, that vice is itself its own punishment, and that there needs no other, seems to be a plausible way of talking. But those must know little of the world or of mankind, who think this alone would be a sufficient restraint. At that rate legislators and governors would have nothing more to do than to represent to the people the turpitude and deformity of fraud, injustice, violence, debauchery, and intemperance, and then suffer them to act as they please. But what should we think of the wisdom of any government, that should content itself with enacting good laws, without any other sanctions, than the leaving men to the natural consequences of their own actions? In all well-policed states, wherever there have been laws, it has been judged necessary to enforce the observance of them with sanctions of positive penalties against the violators of those laws (e).

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(e) The Chinese philosophers talk much of the natural re-



But after all, civil penalties can reach no farther than to the outward actions and behaviour: they can at best only restrain open acts of wickedness. But if bad men have nothing farther to fear than the penalties of human laws, these can have no influence to prevent their giving way to sinful thoughts, affections and dispositions, which do not properly come within the reach of human judicatories, or to hinder them from committing the greatest wickedness in secret, when they flatter themselves that they shall escape detection, or that by fraud, bribery, interest, or power, they shall avoid the judgments of earthly tribunals. Or, if their crimes should expose them to death, they may despise the penalty, if death be all they have to fear, and they have nothing to apprehend after it. But if, besides all this, they should really believe, that there is a supreme governor and judge, of infinite power, wisdom, and justice, who knoweth all their actions, and even their most secret intentions and thoughts, and will call them to a strict account; and that the penalties of human laws and governments are far from being the worst they have to fear, but that much greater punishments are prepared for them in a future state, this, if really believed, must needs have a mighty influence to stem the violence of their vicious appetites and passions, and to awaken them to serious thoughts, which might put them in way of better impressions. Human laws and penalties will be found too weak to restrain men, where there is no fear of God before their eyes, no regard to a future state, and the powers of the world to come.

It has been already shewn, that the wisest men among

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wards and punishments of virtue and vice. But they are far from trusting to this, as sufficient to deter evil doers, and to preserve good order in the state. Nowhere are the punishments inflicted on those that violate the laws more severe and rigorous.

the Pagans were sensible, that it was necessary for the advantage of society, that the people should believe the punishments of a future state (*f*).” And yet certain it is, that at the time of our Saviour’s coming the fear of those punishments was in a great measure lost among men. This was very much owing to the libertine principles of the great men, and even of the philosophers, which spread among the people. And this may well be regarded as one principal cause of that amazing licentiousness, which then prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, the most knowing and civilized of the Heathen nations.

To awaken men therefore to a sense of the divine judgments, and to restore the fear of God, which was almost banished out of the world, was a matter of great importance. And accordingly, when it pleased God to send his own Son to make a new and solemn publication of his laws to mankind, and also to make a clear discovery of eternal life, as

(*f*) The ingenious Mr. Hume, whom no man will suspect of being governed by religious prejudices, speaking of the received notions, “That the Deity will inflict punishments on vice, and confer infinite rewards on virtue,” says, that “those who attempt to disabuse them of such prejudices, may, for aught he knows, be good reasoners, but that he cannot allow them to be good citizens and politicians, since they free men from one restraint upon their passions, and make the infringement of the laws of equity and society in one respect more easy and secure.” Hume’s *Philosophical Essays*, p. 231. And Lord Bolingbroke observes, that “the doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future state has so great a tendency to enforce the civil laws, and to restrain the vices of men, that reason, which (as he pretends) cannot decide for it on principles of natural theology, will not decide against it on principles of good policy.” See his works, Vol. V. p. 322. edit. 4to.

the glorious reward of their sincere and dutiful obedience; nothing could be more proper and necessary, than that he should at the same time denounce the most awful punishments against those that should persist in a presumptuous course of vice and wickedness. The Gospel therefore not only exhibited the most glorious discoveries of the divine grace and mercy that were ever made to mankind, but the wrath of God is there revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And this is no less necessary in a revelation designed for common use than the former.

Whosoever impartially considers the discourses of our Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded by the Evangelists, will find that this most amiable and benevolent Saviour, who came to call sinners to repentance, and display all the charms of the divine love and goodness to invite them to forsake their evil ways, and to come to him for happiness, doth also represent in the most striking manner the just vengeance which shall be inflicted on obstinate impenitent offenders. And in this he was faithfully followed by the apostles, who were animated by his divine spirit, and published his Gospel to the world. Nothing can possibly exceed the account that is given of the awful solemnity of the future judgment, "when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and every man shall receive according to the things done in the body, whether good or evil." The punishments to be inflicted on the wicked in a future state are described in the most strong and ardent expressions, and in a manner fitted to strike the minds of the most hardened sinners with terror and amazement, to awaken them, if possible, to a sense of their guilt and danger. The descriptions are general, and it is wisely ordered, that they should be so: but the design is not to insinuate that all bad men shall be punished with an equal degree of severity. There are se-

veral passages from which it appears, that there shall be a great difference made between some and others: that some, as our Saviour speaks, "shall be beaten with many stripes," others comparatively "with few:" that even amongst heinous offenders it shall be more tolerable for some than for others in the day of judgment, according to the different aggravations of their crimes. We are no where informed what shall be the least degree of punishment which shall be inflicted. Such a discovery is no way necessary, and would probably be abused. But this we are sure of, that no man shall be punished above the real demerit of his crimes. Infinite Grace and Goodness may confer a glory and felicity upon good men above what they could have pretended to claim as strictly due to them. But a just and wise and good God will never inflict a punishment upon sinners greater than their sins really deserve. And of this certainly he must be acknowledged to be the properest judge. Our wisest way is not to endeavour to diminish the evil of sin to ourselves, or to make exceptions against the punishments as too rigorous and severe, but to guard against those evil courses which would expose us to the threatened penalties. What St. Paul saith of human laws and governors, holds proportionably true of the divine: "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same (g)." The divine threatenings as well as promises, proceed from the supreme Wisdom and Goodness as well as Righteousness and Justice. The original intention of promulgating these threatenings, is not that they may be ex-

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(g) Rom. viii. 3.



ecuted, but that the execution of them may be prevented: it is to hinder us from destroying ourselves, and persisting in those sinful courses which will end in misery and ruin. The design of all is to promote the universal good, and to maintain the peace, order, and harmony of the moral world. Turn thou from those evil practices, which, if there were no threatenings against them, thou oughtest to avoid from a regard to the will of God, and to the true perfection, dignity, and happiness of thy own nature, and thou needest not to fear those threatenings, but hast glory and immortality before thee. But if, notwithstanding all the warnings that are given us, we will still go on in the way which leadeth to destruction, and for a little present worldly gain, or the gratifications of a vicious appetite, forfeit eternal glory, and run the hazard of the greatest misery in a future state, what can it be charged upon but our own inexcusable guilt and folly?

Those, therefore, who make the doctrine of future punishments an objection against Christianity, act a very unreasonable part. If the Gospel spoke only smooth things, peace to the wicked, the vicious, and the profligate, it might indeed please the corrupt part of mankind, who are desirous to give a full indulgence to their exorbitant lusts and appetites, but it would be of the worst consequence to the cause of virtue, piety, and righteousness, and would furnish an unanswerable objection against the truth and divinity of the Christian Revelation. If it be so hard, with all the threatenings and restraints that can be laid upon men, to keep them within any tolerable bounds, what would it be if those restraints should be removed? I do not see upon what foundation they can pretend to be friends to their country and to mankind, who at the same time that they endeavour to deprive good men of those hopes of future hap-

piness, which are the most powerful supports of virtue, and the greatest comfort of their lives, take pains to set wicked men loose from the fears of future punishment, when we find by experience, that all is little enough to stem the torrent of prevailing corruption.

## THE CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now gone through what I intended, and shall conclude with a few observations upon the whole.

1. We may hence see, that reason, if left merely to itself in the present state of mankind, is not a safe and certain guide in matters of religion. The proof which hath been given of this from fact and experience is of the greatest weight. We have not proceeded in this inquiry upon speculative notions of what human reason might be supposed to be capable of attaining to by its own unassisted force, but have endeavoured to form the judgment of what may be expected from it, from what it has actually done. And we have considered it not merely as it has been found among the vulgar, but as it has appeared among the greatest masters of reason in the Pagan world. And the conclusion this will lead us to will, I am afraid, be different from that which a learned and ingenious author has drawn from the representation he has given of the state of the Heathen world, with respect to the points we have been considering. "From hence (says he) it will follow, that the light of reason is not that uncertain, weak, insufficient, inconsistent thing, that is by some pretended, nor ought it to be treated as something carnal and dim (*h*)."<sup>1</sup> That reason has done and may do great things, when duly exercised,

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(*h*) See Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 357, 358.

and under a proper guidance, I readily allow; and that it may be of signal use for defending and confirming sacred truth, and detecting superstition and error, in opposition to the frauds and impositions of designing men. Reason is a valuable gift of God, and it highly concerneth us to endeavour to improve and not to abuse it. Nor is any thing to be admitted that is contrary to its plain and evident dictates. But it was never designed to be our only guide exclusive of Divine Revelation. And if we must judge from experience, we shall not be apt to form a very advantageous idea of the powers of human reason, when trusting to its own perspicacity in things spiritual and divine without a higher assistance (*i*). It was therefore a great instance of the wisdom and goodness of God towards mankind, that he favoured them with the light of Divine Revelation from

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(*i*) It is a just observation of Lord Bacon, that “the only cause and root of almost all errors in the sciences is this, that whilst we falsely admire the force and abilities of the human mind, we do not seek out the true and proper assistances for it.”—“*Causa et radix serè omnium malorum in scientiis, ea una est, quòd dum mentis humanæ vires falsò miramur, vera ejus auxilia non quæramus.\**” What that great man seems here to have particularly in view, is, that philosophers in all ages, from a too high opinion of the force and extent of their own genius, have been apt to depend upon schemes and hypotheses of their own framing, without a due attention to experiments, and those helps which might have led them to a better knowledge of the nature of things. In like manner, it has often happened that through an overweening conceit of the strength of their own powers, men have neglected and despised the helps afforded them by Divine Revelation; or they have not kept close to its instructions, but have attempted to be wise above that which is written; “intruding into things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds,” as the apostle speaks, Col. ii. 18.

\* Bacon. Nov. Organ. Scientiar. aphor. 9.



the beginning of the world, which, if carefully adhered to, and duly improved, would have been of the most signal use. And afterwards he was graciously pleased to interpose by renewed discoveries of his will, for recovering mankind from their darkness and corruption to the right knowledge and practice of important truth and duty. And if, notwithstanding these advantages, men have generally fallen from the knowledge of God and true religion, and have corrupted it with gross superstitions and idolatries, this is no argument that Revelation is of no use or significance. On the contrary, it furnisheth a convincing proof of the weakness of human reason in the present depraved state of mankind; and we may justly conclude, that if, even with the helps it has received from Divine Revelation, it is still so prone to fall into error in matters of great importance, much more would it be apt to lead men astray, if left entirely destitute of that assistance.

This leads me to observe,

2dly, That we should set a high value on the Gospel of Jesus, which is the perfection of all the divine revelations that have been given to mankind, and to which the several prior revelations were designed to be preparatory. It has every thing in it that is necessary for guiding men in the way of salvation. The idea there given us of the Deity is the most worthy and sublime that can be imagined, admirably fitted to fill us with the highest love to God, and the most thankful admiration of his infinite grace and goodness, and at the same time with the most awful veneration of his unchangeable righteousness, justice, and purity. The Gospel discoveries have also a manifest tendency to beget in us an ingenuous trust and confidence in him, and to encourage us to draw near to him with an humble freedom, through that great Mediator, who by his wise and sovereign ap-

pointment hath made expiation for our sins, and obtained eternal redemption for us.

Again, nothing can be more holy and excellent than the laws and precepts which are there given us. Our duty is set before us in its just extent. Morality is carried to its noblest height, without running into extravagancies or unnatural extremes. The design of all its precepts, doctrines, and ordinances, is to form us by a life of holiness and virtue here, for a state of perfect goodness and purity in a better world. The motives which are proposed to animate us to obedience, are the most powerful that can be imagined, drawn from the charms of the divine love and goodness, and from a regard to our own highest interest and happiness: we are raised to the most glorious privileges and sublime hopes, and have the most perfect and lovely example of the Son of God in our nature proposed to our imitation. Besides which, the gracious assistances of the Holy Spirit are promised and provided. And finally, eternal life is brought into the most clear and open light. The most ravishing discoveries are made of that everlasting happiness and glory which is prepared for good men in the heavenly state. And that nothing might be wanting to render the Revelation complete for moral purposes, as the glad tidings of pardon and salvation are published to penitent returning sinners, who forsake their evil ways, and yield themselves unto God in sincere and dutiful obedience; so on the other hand the awful solemnities of the future judgment are there also displayed in the most striking manner, and dreadful punishments are denounced against those who reject offered mercy, and obstinately persist in vice and wickedness.

This leads to another observation proper to be made on this occasion; and that is, that Christianity duly believed and practised tends to the advantage of society, to promote the welfare of kingdoms and states, and to preserve good

order in the world. If men followed the sacred precepts and directions it gives, what a happy world this would be! Impartial justice, generous honesty, exact fidelity, extensive benevolence, and a peaceful harmony and concord would generally prevail. The irregular passions and sensual affections would be brought under a due subjection to religion and reason; every one would be content in his station, and diligent in performing the duties of it. The state would be as one large family, all united in mutual love, rejoicing in one another's welfare, and desirous to promote it. Kings, if they were governed by the precepts of Christianity, would act as the fathers of their people: righteousness and judgment, clemency and mercy, would be the stability of their throne; rulers supreme and subordinate would be just, ruling in the fear of God. Subjects would be submissive and obedient to the higher powers, and render all due allegiance and fidelity for conscience sake. The Gospel, properly attended to, would check and restrain the abuse of liberty, and keep it within proper bounds, that it might not run into licentiousness. Husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, pastors and their flocks, would fulfil the duties of their several relations; and a stop would be put to that torrent of corruption, that inundation of vice and sensuality, which threatens ruin to states and kingdoms, and tends to the utter subversion of all order and good polity.

It cannot be denied, that what has been now mentioned is the natural tendency of the Christian precepts, as laid down in the Holy Scriptures, wherever this religion is sincerely believed and embraced. I shall on this occasion subjoin the testimony of a great author, whom I mentioned before, and who must be acknowledged to be a very able judge of these matters, and was far from a narrow way of thinking; it is the celebrated M. de Montesquieu. As, in a passage before cited, he extols the morality of the Gos-

pel, and declares it to be one of the most excellent gifts of God to mankind, so on another occasion he takes notice of its good influence considered in a political view. Having observed that Mr. Bayle takes upon him to affirm, that a state made up of real Christians, acting according to the rules of Christianity, could not subsist, he asks, "Why not? The citizens would have a clear knowledge of their several duties, and a great zeal to fulfil them: they would have a just notion of the right of natural defence: and the more they thought they owed to religion, the more sensible they would be of what they owed to their country." He adds, that "the principles of Christianity, deeply engraven upon the heart, would be of infinitely greater force than the false honour of monarchies, the human virtues of republics, and the servile fear of despotic states (*k*)."  
The same author mentions it as "an admirable thing, that the Christian religion, which seems to have for its object only the happiness of another life, does also make up our happiness in this (*l*)."

It were easy to enlarge upon this last observation, and shew what a tendency the Christian religion has to pro-

(*k*) "Ce seroient des citoyens infiniment eclairés sur leurs devoirs, et qui auroient un tres grand zele pour les remplir: ils sentiroient tres bien les droits de la defence naturelle: plus ils croiroient devoir a la religion, plus ils penseroient devoir a la patrie. Les principes du Christianisme bien gravés dans le coeur seroient infiniment plus forts, que ce faux honneur des monarchies, ces vertus humaines des republicues, et cette crainte servile des états despotiques." *De l'Esprit des Loix*, tome II. livre xxiv. chap. 6. p. 154. edit. Edinb. See also to the same purpose, *ibid.* chap. 8. p. 152.

(*l*) "Chose admirable! la religion Chretienne, qui ne semble avoir d'objet que la felicité de l'autre vie, fait encore notre bonheur dans celle-ci." *Ibid.* p. 151.

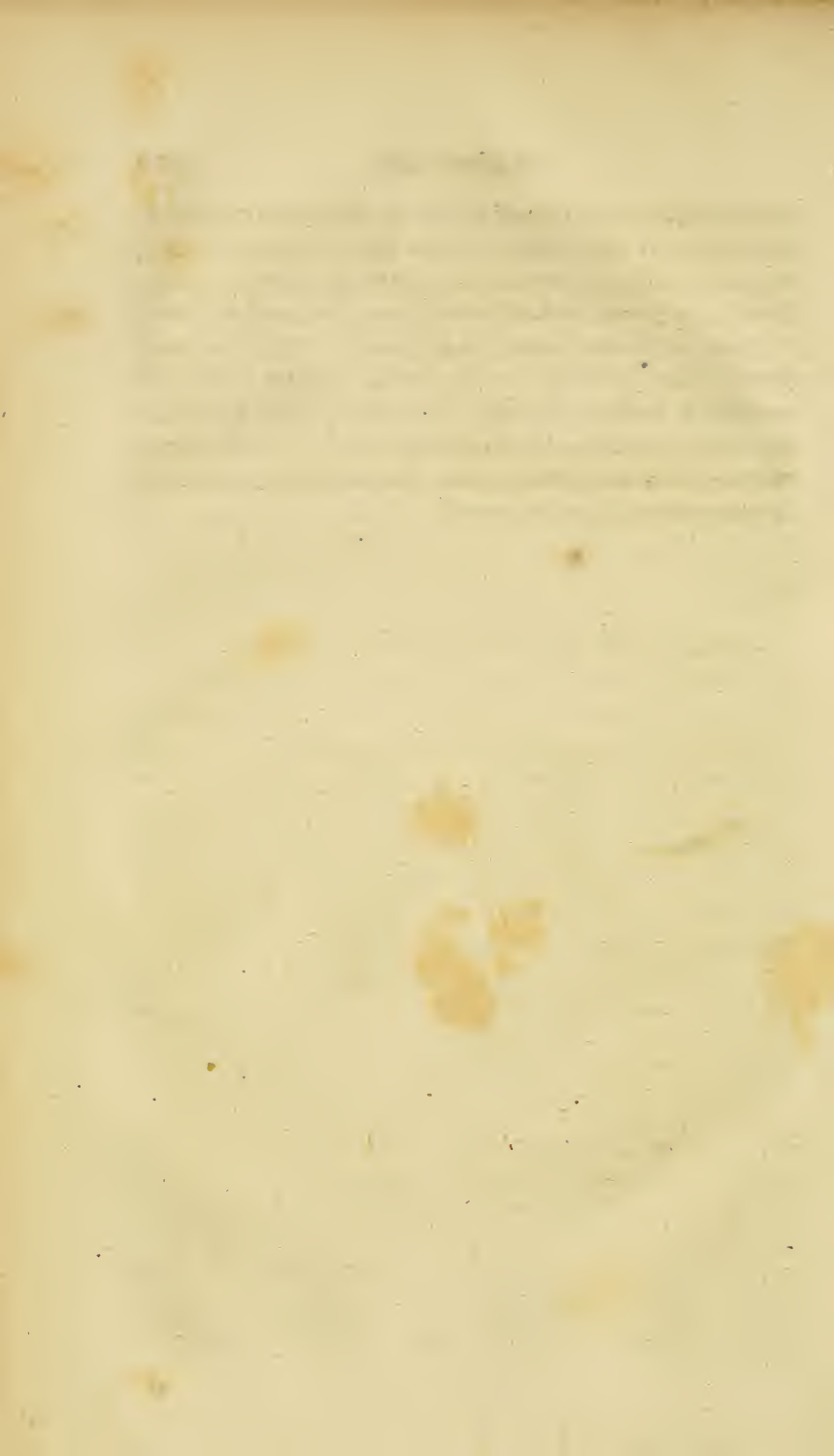


mote our present happiness, and how vastly it contributes to the real satisfaction of life. Its admirable precepts, when duly practised, lay a foundation for inward tranquillity, peace, and self-enjoyment. Even those of its precepts, which seem most harsh and grievous to the sensual appetites and passions, manifestly tend to the true perfection and felicity of our nature, and to recover the soul from its ignominious servitude to vicious lusts, to a noble spiritual and moral liberty. It doth not impose upon us any of those unnatural hardships and severities which superstition hath often laid upon its votaries: nor doth it forbid any pleasures, but what are base and vicious in their nature, or excessive in their degree. It directs and assists us in the true enjoyment of the blessings of Providence, with a most thankful sense of the Divine Goodness. And its glorious promises and sublime hopes open the way for us to pleasures of a still nobler and sublimer nature, the happy prelibations of invisible and immortal joys.

The design I had in view has led me chiefly to consider those principles and duties which are usually looked upon as comprehended in what is called natural religion, and which are in some degree discoverable by human reason. And it has been shewn, that in fact, through the corruption of mankind, these principles and duties were so perverted and obscured as to render an extraordinary Revelation from God highly needful, for setting them in the most convincing light, and enforcing them by a divine authority. It appears from what has been observed, that the Christian Revelation has done this to the greatest advantage. And if we should proceed farther to a particular consideration of those more peculiar doctrines of Christianity, which reason could not at all have discovered if they had not been revealed, especially those relating to the methods of our redemption through Jesus Christ, here a glorious scene would open to us, fitted to fill our minds with

the highest admiration of the divine wisdom and righteousness, and love to mankind. Christianity considered in this view, is a dispensation of grace and joy, and hath brought the best, the happiest tidings that were ever published to the world. But I have already far exceeded the bounds I originally intended, and therefore shall, without farther enlargement, conclude with observing, that we, who have the benefit of the Gospel Revelation, are under indispensable obligations to endeavour to make a good use of our advantages, and to receive with the greatest veneration and thankfulness the glorious discoveries it brings. We should be grateful to Divine Providence for the other advantages we enjoy, for our trade and commerce, for the flourishing of arts and sciences among us, and for the enjoyment of civil liberty. But the most valuable of all our privileges is, that we have the Holy Scriptures in our hands, and the Christian Revelation clearly published amongst us, which hath instructed us in the right knowledge of the Deity, hath set our duty before us in its just extent, and furnished the noblest motives and assistances for the performance of it, and hath raised us to such sublime hopes of a complete eternal felicity. Surely this calls in a particular manner for our adoring thankfulness to God, to whose rich grace and mercy we owe it that we are called out of darkness into his marvellous light. It is astonishing to think, that there should be persons found among us, who seem desirous to extinguish this glorious light, and to return to the antient darkness of Paganism again: who seem weary of the Gospel, and with a preposterous zeal endeavour to subvert its proofs and evidences, and to expose it, as far as in them lies, to the derision and contempt of mankind. But the attempts of such men against our holy religion should only quicken our zeal and heighten our esteem for it, and make us more earnestly desirous to build up ourselves in our most holy faith, and to adorn it by an exemplary conver-

sation becoming the Gospel of Christ. Christianity is not a bare system of speculative opinions, but a practical institution, a spiritual and heavenly discipline, all whose doctrines, precepts, promises, and ordinances, are designed to form men to a holy and virtuous temper and practice. The most effectual way, therefore, we can take to promote its sacred interests, is to shew the happy influence it hath upon our own hearts and lives, by abounding in the fruits of piety, righteousness, and charity, and thus making an amiable representation of it to the world.





# INDEX

TO

## THE SECOND VOLUME.

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☞ The letter N. refers to the Notes at the bottom of the page.

### A

*ANTONINUS, Marcus*—the emperor and philosopher, speaks of the gods as the authors of all good things, and that to them we ought to offer up our prayers for assistance in duty, and our thanksgivings for the blessings we enjoy, page 146. The goodness of his nature sometimes got the better of his stoical principles, 171. He represents all sin and wickedness as owing to ignorance and error, 174—and as necessary and unavoidable, 176. His doctrine of forgiving injuries in several respects excellent, but carried in some instances to an extreme, and placed on wrong foundations, 182. He allowed, and in some cases advised, self-murder, 195. His arguments for the absolute indifference of all external things considered, 218, 219. He excelled the other philosophers in the sense he had of the strict obligation of truth, and held that he who utters a lie willingly is guilty of impiety, 227. He every where expresses himself doubtfully about the immortality of the soul, 295. Sometimes supposes it to be resumed into the universal soul immediately upon its quitting the body, *ibid.* He never gives the least hint that men shall be judged after death for their conduct in this life, or that the wicked shall be punished in a future state, 296. 376. He represents duration as of no moment to happiness, 357.

*Apathy*, Stoical—doctrine of it considered, 167.

*Aristipphus*—held that nothing is by nature just or unjust, honourable or base, but only by law and custom, 85. He and the Cyrenaics his followers asserted that corporeal pleasure, which actually moves and strikes the senses, is the chiefest good, and highest end of man, 88, 89. He is ranked by Cicero with Socrates as a man of extraordinary and divine endowments, yet was very loose in his morals, 188, N.

*Aristotle*—approves and prescribes the exposing and destroying weak and sickly children, 49—encourages revenge, and seems to blame meekness and forgiveness of injuries, 127—teaches that virtue is the greatest good, but that external advantages are necessary to complete happiness, 216. N.—varies in his doctrine with respect to the immortality of the soul, and sometimes seems absolutely to deny it, 284.

*Attic laws*—Some of them probably derived from those of Moses, 41.

## B.

*Bacon, Lord*—A remarkable aphorism of his, that the cause of almost all evils in the sciences is the entertaining too high an opinion of the powers of the human mind to the neglect of proper assistances, 422 N.

*Barbeyrac, Mr.*—of opinion that men generally come to the knowledge of morals by custom and education, 15.

*Bayle, Mr.*—sets himself to shew the uncertainty of morals, 84. N.—says, that the forgiveness of injuries is contrary to the law of nature, 129—pleads for the community of wives, and for men's lending them to one another, as having nothing in it disagreeable to reason, 137. N.

*Bolingbroke, Lord*—asserts that the whole law of nature, from the first principles to the last conclusions, is naturally and necessarily known to every man, 4—yet acknowledges that the law of nature is hid from our sight by the variegated clouds of civil laws and customs, and can yield but a dubious light to those that have the clearest sight, till those interpositions are removed, 69—and that they who make the highest pretences are unable, on many occasions, to deduce from the laws of their own nature, with precision and certainty, what these require of them, and what is right or wrong, just or unjust for them to do, 120. N. He asserts, that there is no moral precept

in the whole Gospel but what was taught by the philosophers, and yet represents it as the law of nature, that God only is to be worshipped and adored: which was not taught or prescribed by any of them, 74, et 115. N.

## C.

*Cesar, Julius*—declared in open senate that there is nothing to be hoped or feared after death, 387.

*Casaubon, Dr. Meric*—His assertion, that there is no evangelical duty which wise men among the Heathens have not taught by the mere strength of natural reason, considered, 74, et seq.

*Cato of Utica*—cried up as a perfect model of virtue, lent his wife to Hortensius, 137—carried his grief for the death of his brother Cepio to an excess, 171, admired for his inflexible severity, 186—addicted to excessive drinking; but Seneca will not allow that this was a fault in him, 191. He taught and practised self-murder, 192.

*Children*—The exposing those of them that were weak and deformed prescribed by a law of Lycurgus, 45—very common in Greece, and other parts of the Pagan world, 48—approved by Plato and Aristotle, 49—prescribed by Romulus, and continued to be practised at Rome for many ages, 59, 60.

*Chinese*—highly extolled by some authors as having the preference to Christians in all moral virtues, 63. Their laws well contrived to preserve public order, but insufficient to furnish a complete rule of morals, *ibid.*—unnatural lusts common among them, 64—they account drunkenness to be no crime, *ibid.*—take as many concubines as they can keep, *ibid.*—lend and pawn their wives upon occasion, *ibid.*—and dissolve marriages for slight causes, *ibid.* Their cruel custom of exposing and destroying their female children, 65—exceeding litigious and revengeful, *ibid.* Their tribunals full of fraud and injustice, 66. N. See also 299. N. The most cheating nation upon earth, 66. See *Learned Sect* in China.

*Christian Revelation*—was published at a time when mankind were sunk into the most amazing corruption with regard to morals, 230, 231—brought the most perfect scheme of morality that was ever given to the world, and enforced it by the most powerful motives. See *Morality*. The uniform tendency of the whole to promote the practice of holiness and virtue, is

- a strong argument of its divine original, 216, et seq. Life and immortality is brought by it into the clearest and fullest light, 400, et seq. It has given the strongest assurances of the certainty of future happiness, 401—and makes the most inviting discoveries of the nature of that happiness, 404, et seq. The idea there given of it is the noblest that can be conceived, and the best fitted to promote the practice of righteousness and true holiness, 406, 407. It also makes the most awful and striking representations of the judgment to come, and of the punishments which shall be inflicted upon the wicked in a future state, 416, 417. It is the perfection of all the divine Revelations that were ever given to mankind, and therefore to be received with the highest veneration and thankfulness, and to be valued as the greatest of all our privileges, 423, et seq. When duly understood and practised it is of great advantage to kingdoms and states, and has a tendency to promote good order in the world, and public as well as private happiness, 424.
- Christianity*—in many instances raised its professors to a height of fortitude and patience, which the Stoics boasted of, but could not attain to, 221.
- Christians, primitive*—the most pious and virtuous body of men that ever appeared in the world, 261. The purity and innocence of their lives acknowledged by the Pagans themselves, 360, 361. Glorious effects produced by their hopes of a blessed immortality, *ibid.*
- Chrysippus*, the famous Stoic philosopher—Arrogant strains of his, equalling the wise man with Jupiter in virtue and happiness, 155. He reckoned the most incestuous mixtures and impurities among indifferent things, 189—held the community of women, *ibid.*—gave obscene interpretations of the Pagan mythology, *ibid.*—was addicted to drunkenness, and died of it, 190.
- Cicero*—bestows the highest encomiums on the usefulness and excellency of philosophy, especially with regard to morals, 73—yet observes, that it was by many not only neglected but reproached, 82—passes a severe censure on those that make sensual pleasure the chief good, 86. He derives the original of law from the sovereign wisdom and authority which governs the universe, 107. This law he sometimes represents as naturally and necessarily known to all men without instruction or



an interpreter, 109. The contrary is proved from his own acknowledgments, 110. He sends men to the contemplation of the works of nature, especially of the heavens, for instruction in moral duty, 111. What he seems principally to rely upon is, that the natural law is made known by the reason of the wise man, which he supposes to be the same with the reason of God himself, 113. He makes little mention of God in his Book of Offices, where he treats of ethics, 120. He encourages retaliation of injuries, 127—pleads for fornication as having nothing blameable in it, and as universally allowed and practised, 139. Sometimes he seems to condemn suicide, at other times commends and justifies it, 202—prefers the Stoical scheme of morals, in his Book of Offices, to that of the Peripatetics, 216. His account of the *Honestum* considered, 223. He argues excellently for the immortality of the soul in several parts of his works, 319—yet sometimes in his familiar letters to his friends represents death as putting an end to all sense of good or evil, 320, 321. Even where he seems to plead most strenuously for the immortality of the soul, he does not pretend to a certainty, but talks doubtfully about it, 345. It is not clear whether he held the soul to be properly a part of the Divine Essence; but he argued, that it must be necessarily eternal by the force of its own nature, 332. He makes no use of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul for moral purposes, either for supporting men under troubles and adversities, or for engaging them to the pursuit and practice of virtue, 352. The notion of future punishments is absolutely rejected by him, both in his philosophical treatises, and in a public oration before the Roman people, 371. He so explains the maxim of the philosophers that the gods are never angry, as to exclude all fear of punishments after death, 374, et seq.

*Civil laws, and customs that had the force of laws*—not adequate rules of moral duty, 37. 69. Instances in which they were contrary to good morals, 40, et seq.

*Clerc, Mr. Le*—thinks it probable that several of the usages and institutions, which were common to the Egyptians and Hebrews, were derived to them from the earliest ages, and originally of divine appointment, 25. N.

*Community of wives*—allowed by many of the philosophers, par-

ticularly by Plato, the Cynics, and Stoics, 133. 136, 137. 189.—practised by many nations, 133. N.

*Confucius*, the famous Chinese philosopher—did not pretend to be himself the author of the moral precepts he delivered, but to have derived them from wise men of the greatest antiquity, 26. N. He carried the custom of mourning for dead parents to an extreme that is prejudicial to society, 172. N. He makes no mention of the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishments of a future state, 297. This doctrine rejected by his disciples. See *Learned Sect.*

*Le Conservateur*—a periodical paper published at Paris, attempts to justify the laws of some nations, which ordered old and infirm persons to be put to death, 67. N.—pretends, that suicide is not contrary to reason, though it is forbidden by religion, 204.

*Customs*, barbarous and impure—of several nations, mentioned by Eusebius, from which they were reclaimed by Christianity, 67.

*Cynics*—professed to make morals their whole study, yet shewed little regard to modesty and decency, 135—denied the immortality of the soul, 283.

*Cyrenaics, Sect of*—hold sensual pleasure to be the chief good of man; and that the pleasures of the body are greater than those of the mind, and its pains and griefs worse, 89. Difference between them and the Epicureans, 96. See *Aristippus*. They denied the immortality of the soul, 283.

#### D.

*Deists, modern*—find fault with the Gospel doctrine of forgiving injuries, and loving our enemies, in which they fall short of some antient Heathens, 129. They are generally very loose in their doctrines concerning the gratification of the sensual passions, and allow great liberties to incontinence and impurity, 142. Some of them pretend that the immortality of the soul, and a future state of retributions, is so evident, that there needs no revelation to assure us of it; others treat it as a popular error, or at best as absolutely uncertain, and as having no solid foundation in reason to support it, 267.

*Diogenes the Cynic*—admired by Epictetus as a perfect pattern of virtue, and sent by God to instruct and reform mankind,

135. He held the community of women, and that marriage is nothing, *ibid.* His shameful filthiness and incontinence, *ibid.* et 136.

*Dionysius Halicarnasseus*—An observation of his, that if the soul be dissolved at death, those men cannot be accounted happy who have perished on account of their virtue, 355, 356.

*Discours sur la vie heureuse*—a tract under that title—is designed to shew that happiness consists only in the gratification of the fleshly appetites; and asserts, that we ought to take care of the body rather than of the soul, and to cultivate the mind only to procure advantages for the body, 89. N.—confidently pronounces, that it is demonstrated by a thousand arguments that there is no other life but this; and that the mortality of the soul was the general doctrine of all the philosophers from the beginning, 275. N.

*Dissolutions and Renovations* of the world perpetually returning at certain periods—taught by many of the antient philosophers, particularly by the Stoics, 290—and by the Learned Sect in China at this day, *ibid.* N.

## E.

*Eastern Sages*—famous for their maxims derived to them, not in a way of reasoning and philosophy, but by tradition from the most antient times, 26. N.

*Education and Instruction*—the ordinary way of communicating to men the knowledge of morals, 13, et seq.

*Egyptian laws and customs*—admired by the antients, 39. A remarkable custom of theirs, with reflections upon it, 40. Their laws and customs in several instances of an immoral tendency, *ibid.* et seq.

*Elysium*—the reward of it but temporary, 338.

*Epicurus*—held pleasure to be the chief good, and highest happiness of man, 89. His morals highly commended both by some of the antients and moderns, *ibid.* It is an essential defect in his scheme of morals, that it had no regard to the Deity, or to a divine authority and law; and yet he writ books about piety and sanctity, 89. His morality defective with respect to the duties we owe to mankind, *ibid.* He taught that business and cares do not consist with happiness; and that a wise man ought not to marry, or to concern himself with public affairs, 90. He gives excellent precepts of moderation, temperance,

and the government of the passions, *ibid.* et 92—represents the inconvenience of indulging venereal pleasures: and declares, that the pleasures he recommends, are not those of luxury and excess, but such as are under the conduct of prudence, *ibid.* et 93—yet is said to have had several mistresses, 94. The virtues he prescribes are resolved wholly into a man's own private advantage, without regard to the excellence of virtue, or a divine command, 93—declares, that he could not understand what good there is, but the pleasure of the senses, 94—forbids injustice and other crimes, not for any evil there is in them in themselves considered, but for fear of human punishments, 96. He valued himself upon instructing men in the nature of true happiness, and directing them how to obtain it, 97. He taught that happiness consists in indolence of the body, and tranquillity of mind, *ibid.* Some of the means he proposed to that end were fit and proper, 98. But what he chiefly insisted upon as necessary to make them happy, was the delivering them from the fear of the gods, and the fear of death. His remedy against the first was to deny a providence that concerneth itself with human affairs, 99. The considerations he offered to free men from the fear of death, vain and insufficient, 99. His glorious pretences to fortitude and a contempt of pain, considered and exposed, 100, et seq. His pride and vain-glory even in his dying moments, 101. His contempt of other philosophers, and envy at their reputation, 103. Honours done him by his country, 104.

*Epicureans*—their great veneration for the memory of Epicurus—they in effect made a god of him, 104—and looked upon it to be an impious thing, to bring in any other tenets than those which he taught them, *ibid.* They were very numerous, and continued when other sects of philosophers failed, 105—highly favoured by the great men in Rome, by the emperors and the people, *ibid.*—yet severe decrees were made against them by some cities and states, *ibid.*

*Epictetus*—His observation concerning the great difficulty of applying general preconceptions to particular cases, 119. He allows no sanctions of rewards and punishments, but what flow from the nature of the actions themselves, 150—asserts, that man's will and choice is unconquerable by God himself, 153—carries the Stoical doctrine of apathy to a degree of extrava-



gance, 168—represents all wickedness as owing to ignorance and a wrong persuasion, 174—will not allow that any injury can be done to a good man, 178—advises to suicide in some cases, 194. No philosopher ever more strongly asserted the absolute indifferency of all external things, 209. He complains, that he never met with a true Stoic, 220. He never speaks of a future state of retributions, 295—rejects the doctrine of future punishments, *ibid.*

*L'Esprit, De*—The author of the book so called makes the laws of the state the rule and measure of virtue and duty, 38. N. He brings many instances of impure customs among the nations, and seems to approve them, 68—makes the love of pleasure the chief incentive to virtue; and affirms, that the perfection of legislation consists in exciting men to the noblest actions by fomenting and gratifying the sensual passions, 87, et seq. N.—will not allow that gallantry is a fault or vice in a nation where luxury is necessary, *ibid.*

*Eternal life to all good men*—not taught by the most eminent of the Pagan philosophers, 340, et seq. It commences with respect to the souls of the righteous immediately after their departure from the body; but includes the resurrection of the body, and shall then be completed, 404. 408. We could not be assured of eternal happiness as the reward of our imperfect obedience, but by an express Divine Revelation, 410. It is promised in the Gospel to all good men without exception, 411, 412.

*Exoteric and Esoteric doctrine of the antients*, 348, et seq. The same distinction obtains among the Chinese, 350, N.

## F.

*Fall of Man*—New duties required of men in consequence of it, concerning which God discovered his will in the first ages, 21.

*Fontenelle, Mr.*—looked upon the wickedness of men without bitterness, as being the effect of an eternal necessary chain, 177. N. Reflections upon this, *ibid.*

*Forgiveness of injuries*—recommended by some of the philosophers, but contradicted by others, 127—and by many of our modern Deists, 128. The excellency of the Gospel doctrine on this head, 129. 184. 244.

*Fornication*—not accounted a sin among the Pagans in the men,

though they acknowledged a turpitude in women's prostituting themselves, 137, et seq. The philosophers practised and pleaded for it, *ibid.* It is expressly prohibited in the Gospel; and the prohibition enforced by the most powerful arguments and motives, 140.

*Fruit, forbidden*—The injunction concerning it virtually contained a considerable part of the moral law, 20.

### G.

*Galen*—professed to be quite ignorant of the nature of the human soul, but suspected it to be corporeal, 285, 286.

*Gassendus*—carries his apology for Epicurus so far as to praise him for his disinterested piety, 90. N—gives it as the general opinion of the ancients, that human souls are parts of the divine essence, and that at death they lose their individuality, and are resolved into the substance of the universal soul, 308. N.

*Gentiles*—In what sense it is to be understood that they had the law written in their hearts, 28. N. The pious among them acknowledged by the Jews to have a portion in the world to come, 23. See *Heathens*.

*Gloucester, Bishop of*—shews, that the laws of civil society alone considered, are insufficient to secure the cause of virtue, or to prevent or cure moral disorders, 39. N. His observation on a passage of Terence concerning the custom of exposing children, 60. He observes, that the great utility of the doctrine of future rewards and punishments is no small argument of its truth, 278—exposes the sophistry and false reasoning of Plutarch in his tract of Superstition, 374.

*GOD*, the knowledge of—is the great foundation of morality, 29. Noble idea of God given in the Holy Scriptures, and of the duty we owe him, 234, et seq.

*Gods*—The noblest acts of piety prescribed by the philosophers, were directed to be rendered not to one God only, but to the gods, 120. 148. It was an universal maxim among the philosophers that the gods are never angry, nor hurt any one, 374. This was carried by many of them so far to exclude all divine punishments for sin, *ibid.* et 376—yet others of them acknowledged, that the gods have a displeasure against sin, and chastise or punish men on the account of it, 378—uncertainty and inconsistency on this head, 380.

*Gospel Dispensation*—opened with a full and free pardon, to penitent returning sinners, of all their past iniquities; and at the same time laid them under the strongest obligations, and gave them the best directions and assistances for a holy and virtuous practice, 232. It contains the clearest discoveries, and makes the most glorious promises of eternal life, 401, et seq. The light of the Gospel is the greatest of all our privileges, and calls for our highest thankfulness, 427, et seq.

*Gospel Scheme of morality.* See *Morality*.

*Grecians, antient*—accounted among the most knowing and civilized nations of antiquity, 41—had excellent institutions, yet many of their laws and customs were contrary to good morals, 42, et seq.

*Grotius*—of opinion that the law was communicated to Adam the first father of mankind by divine revelation, and from him transmitted to the human race, 21. N.—mentions some institutions and customs common to all men, which he ascribes to a perpetual and almost uninterrupted tradition from the first ages, 25. N.

*Gymnosophists*—a sect of Indian philosophers mightly admired among the antients for their wisdom and virtue, 198. They made a wrong use of a noble principle, the immortality of the soul, by voluntarily putting an end to their own lives, *ibid.* Instances of the same kind among other nations, 199. N.

## H.

*Happiness*—Men are generally very apt to form wrong judgments of what is conducive to true happiness, 13. The philosophers proposed to lead men to perfect happiness in this present life, 209, et seq. They held, that a man may be completely happy under the greatest torments merely by the force of his own virtue, without regard to a future recompence, 211. The generality of people among the Pagans had very mean notions of the happiness of good men in a future state, 384.

*Heathens*—God did a great deal in the course of his Providence to preserve a sense of morals among them, if they had been duly careful to make a right use of the advantages afforded them, 27, et seq. When they fell from a right knowledge of God, they fell also in important instances, from a just knowledge of moral duty, 29. They had some general notions of God

and a Providence, and of the moral differences of things, which furnished encouragements to virtue, and tended to restrain vice and wickedness, 34. That part of the moral law which relates to civil and social virtue was in a considerable degree preserved among them, as far as was necessary to the peace and order of society, 34. et 126. But they were greatly deficient in that part of it which relates to the duty we more immediately owe to God, and in that which relates to the restraining and governing the fleshly concupiscence, 34, et 120. 129, et seq. They were universally abandoned to uncleanness and impurity, 140—and were sunk into an amazing corruption, both in their notions and practice, with regard to morals at the time of our Saviour's coming, 230, et seq. No sufficient remedy was to be expected from their religion, their civil laws, or the instructions of their philosophers, *ibid.* There was need of an extraordinary revelation to give them a complete rule of moral duty, enforced by a divine authority, and the most important motives; and the Christian revelation was admirably fitted for that purpose, 232, et seq. A divine revelation was also needful to give them a clear discovery and full assurance of a future state. See *Immortality*.

*Heraclitus* the philosopher—admired by the Stoics, 164. His vain glorious boasting of himself, *ibid.*

*Homer*—teaches punishments for the wicked in a future state, 366. He represents good men and heroes themselves as disconsolate in a future state, lamenting their condition, and preferring the meanest condition on earth to the most eminent station in Hades, 384.

*Honestum*, τὸ καλόν—regarded by many of the antients as the true criterion of virtue, 223. The philosophers were not agreed in their notions concerning it, 224. et 314.

*Humble* and *Humility*—The Stoical resignation different from that humble submission to God which Christianity requires, 161, 162. N. Humility was generally understood in an ill sense among the Pagans, especially the Stoics, 165—taken in the evangelical sense as recommended by our Saviour, it had properly no place in the Pagan systems of piety and morality, 166.



## I.

*Idolatry*—had a bad influence in corrupting both the notions and practices of mankind with regard to morals, 29.

*Jews*—had holy and excellent laws given them in the principal articles of moral duty, 30—at the time of our Saviour's coming they had perverted the moral law by their traditions, 232, 233. The belief of the immortality of the soul and a future state was very general among them when the Gospel was published, though denied by the sect of the Saducees, 395. 400. They also generally believed the resurrection of the body, but had very imperfect and gross notions of it, *ibid.* et 405.

*Ignorance*—All men's evil actions resolved by Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus wholly into their ignorance, and mistaken judgments of things, 174.

*Immortality of the soul, and a future state.*—The importance of that doctrine shewn, 266. Natural and moral arguments in proof of it are of great weight, 268, et seq.—but it is by divine Revelation that we have the fullest assurance of it, 271. Some notion and belief of it obtained among mankind from the most antient time, and spread generally among the nations, 272, et seq. This was not originally the mere effect of human wisdom and reasoning, but was derived by a most antient tradition from the earliest ages, and probably made a part of the primitive religion communicated by divine revelation to the first parents of the human race, 279, et seq. The belief of it was countenanced and encouraged by the wisest legislators, *ibid.*—but was much weakened by the disputes of the philosophers; many of whom absolutely denied it, 283, et seq.—and those of them that professed to believe it, often spoke of it with great doubt and uncertainty, or argued for it upon insufficient grounds. See *Philosophers*. In the days of Socrates it met with little credit among the generality of the Greeks, 382—and Polybius complains, that in his time it was rejected both by the great men and many of the people; and on this he charges the great corruption of their 'manners, 384. The disbelief of it became very common among the Romans in the latter times of their state, who in this fell from the religion of their ancestors, 385, et seq. The world stood in great need of an extraordinary Revelation from God at the time of our Saviour's appearance, to assure men of the immortality of

the soul, and a future state, 400. Life and immortality is clearly and fully brought to light by the Gospel, 401, et seq. The happy effects of this doctrine where it is sincerely believed and embraced; it tends to comfort us under all the tribulations of this present state; to beget in us a true greatness of soul, and animate us to a continual progress in holiness and virtue, 412, 413. See also 360, 361.

*Impurity and Incontinence*—contrary to the law of nature, and of pernicious consequence to society, 47. N. et 141—universal in the gentile world, and particularly among the philosophers, 138, 139. To recover men from it one noble design of the Gospel, 140. 249, 250. Many of our modern Deists seem to encourage this licentiousness, instead of correcting it, 142, 143. *Inquiry, critical*—into the opinions and practice of the antient philosophers, concerning the nature of the soul, and a future state—a learned and judicious treatise, 289—referred to, 291. 307. 309. 350.

*Juives Lettres*, the author of—declares, that the greatest adversaries of Christianity must own, that the moral precepts of the first preachers of the Gospel were infinitely superior to those of the wisest philosophers of antiquity, 264.

## L.

*Lacedæmonians*—were for sacrificing probity, justice, and every other consideration to what they thought the good of the state required, 43. Many of their laws and customs contrary to humanity, 44. Their cruelty to their slaves, *ibid.* Others of their laws inconsistent with modesty and decency, 46. They were a people admired by all antiquity for their wisdom and virtues, and yet in several respects of a bad character 47, 48.

*Lactantius*—observes, that those among the Pagans who instructed them in the worship of the gods, gave no rules for the conduct of life, and regulating men's manners, 35. N.

*Law*—The heathens generally agreed in deriving the original of law from God, 26. 108.

*Law, moral*—not naturally and necessarily known to all men in its just extent, without instruction, 4. The knowledge of it communicated to mankind in various ways, 5, et seq. viz. by the moral sense, 5, 6.—by a principle of reason judging from the nature and relations of things, 8, 9—by education and human

instruction, 12, 13—and by Divine Revelation, 16. It was for substance known in the patriarchal times, 24—expressly promulgated with great solemnity under the Mosaical dispensation, 29, 30—prescribed and enforced in its highest perfection by the gospel, 232, et seq.

*Laws*—There were laws given to mankind before the flood, the transgression of which brought that awful judgment upon them, 23.

*Laws of civil Society*—imperfect measures of moral duty, 37. See *Civil*.

*Laws of the twelve tables*—preferred by Cicero to all the laws of Greece, and to all the writings of the philosophers, 58. Some of those laws extremely severe, particularly an inhuman one concerning debtors, 58, 59—another for the exposing and destroying deformed children, *ibid*.

*Laws unwritten*—common to all mankind. See *Socrates*.

*Learned Sect among the Chinese*—confine the rewards of good and punishments of bad men to this present life, and suppose them to be the necessary physical effects of virtue and vice, 297—they universally reject the rewards and punishments of a future state, 298, 299—the bad effects of this upon their own conduct, 299. N.

*Legislators*—The most antient pretended to have received their laws from God, that they might have the greater authority with the people, 81.

*Locke, Mr.*—An excellent passage from him to shew, that a complete rule of duty could not be had among the Heathen philosophers, 79. He observes, that human reason failed in its great and proper business of morality, and never from unquestionable principles made out an intire body of the law of nature, 228, 229—and that it should seem by that little that has been hitherto done in it, to be too hard a task for unassisted reason to establish morality in all its parts with a clear and convincing light, *ibid*.

*Love, impure, of boys*—very common in Greece, 49, et seq.—in some places prescribed by their laws, 50—avowed and practised by the most eminent persons among them, 54—it prevailed much at Rome, 63—and in China, 64. Many of the philosophers greatly addicted to it, 130, et seq.

*Lycurgus*—pronounced by the oracle to have been rather a god



than a man, 42. His laws highly celebrated both by antients and moderns, yet fitted rather to render men valiant than just, 43. Several of his institutions contrary to the rules of a sound morality, 43, et seq. See *Lacedæmonians*.

## M.

*Man*—a moral agent, and designed to be governed by a law, 2, 3—nor left at his first creation merely to fix a rule of moral duty to himself, 19. God made early discoveries of his will to him concerning his duty, 19 et seq.

*Meng-Zu*—esteemed the second great Chinese philosopher after Confucius, 297—never makes the least mention in his writings of the immortality of the soul, and a future state, *ibid*.

*Mixtures, incestuous, and unnatural lusts*—common among many of the Heathen nations, 116, 117. N.—reckoned by many of their antient wise men among things indifferent, 129. 188. 224.

*Montesquieu, Mons. de*—commends the laws of Lycurgus, 43. A good observation of his to shew, that incontinence is contrary to the law of nature, and ought to be restrained by the magistrate, 46, 47. N. et 141—gives a disadvantageous character of the Chinese, 66—is a great admirer of the Stoics, 145, 146—declared with his dying breath, that the Gospel morality was the most excellent present which could possibly have been made to man from his Creator, 264, 265. He observes, that the belief of future rewards without future punishments would be a great prejudice to society, 363. He attributes the wrong notions which have obtained among some nations, as if the future state was to be in all respects like the present, to a corruption and abuse of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, 397. His judicious observation, that it is not sufficient that a religion should teach the doctrine of a future state, but that it should also direct to a proper use of it; and that this is admirably done by the Christian religion, 398—and that the resurrection there taught leads to spiritual ideas, *ibid*. He shews, that the Christian religion, considered in a political view, is of great advantage to civil government, 424.

*Moral Law*. See *Law*.

*Moral sense*—implanted in the human heart, 5—not equally strong in all men, *ibid*.—weak and depraved in the present state



of mankind, 6, 7, 8—not designed to be alone an adequate guide in morals, or to preclude the necessity of instruction, 8. 224, 225.

*Morality*—taken in its just extent, comprehends the duties we more immediately owe to God, as well as those that respect our neighbours and ourselves, 33, 34.

*Morality, Pagan.* See *Heathens*.

*Morality, Gospel scheme of*—exceeds what had ever been published to the world before, 232, 233. A summary representation of the Christian morality, with respect to the duties required of us towards God, our neighbours, and ourselves, 233, et seq. It is in nothing deficient, but complete in all its parts, 256—raised to an high degree of purity, yet does not carry it to an unnatural or superstitious extreme, *ibid.* This is shewn in several instances, 257, 258. See also 172. 183. 199. 218. It is enforced by the most powerful motives, far superior to any that were urged by the most celebrated antient moralists, 258, et seq. It is so admirable, that all attempts in after-ages to add to its perfection, have fallen short of its original excellency, and only tended to weaken and corrupt it, 263.

*Moses, law of*—was designed to instruct men in morals, as well as to lead them to the right knowledge and worship of the one true God, 29, 30. The fame of it spread to other nations, and was probably in several respects of use to them, 30.

*Mysteries, antient Pagan*—became at length greatly corrupted to the general depravation of manners in the Pagan world, 70. They had little effect in preserving the sense of a future state, and especially of future punishments among the Greeks and Romans, 383. 388.

## N.

*Navarette*—His account of China seems to be an impartial one, 63—referred to, *ibid.* et 64. 291. 350.

*Noah*—had the divine law made known to him, which was from him transmitted to his descendants, 23.

*Noah, sons of*—Jewish tradition concerning the precepts given to them, 25.

## O.

*Oaths.* See swearing.

*Oracles*—The philosophers directed the people to consult and

obey the oracles of the gods in all matters relating to religion and divine worship, 112. This was Socrates's own practice, and his advice to others, *ibid.* Plato ascribes the greatest and most excellent laws to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, *ibid.*

## P.

*Parents*—A custom among some of the Heathen nations to expose or destroy their sick and aged parents, 67, 116.

*Peripatetics*—They held as well as the Stoics, that a wise and good man is happy under the severest torments, but would not allow that he is happy in the highest degree, 210. The difference between them and the Stoics about the absolute indifference of all external things considered, 214, et seq. Some of them denied the immortality of the soul and its subsistence in a separate state, 284. They are blamed by Cicero for supposing that some things may be profitable which are not honest, 354.

*Philosophy*—High encomiums bestowed upon it by many of the antients, as of the greatest use with regard to morals, 72, 73—and as the only infallible way to make men completely happy, 211, 212.

*Philosophers, Pagan*—Some of them said excellent things concerning moral virtue, and their instructions were probably in several instances of considerable use, 73. The pretence that there is no moral precept in the Gospel, but what the philosophers had taught before, examined, 74, et seq. No proof can be given that they derived all they taught merely from their own reason, without any help from antient tradition, or the light of Divine Revelation, 76. They were universally wrong in encouraging polytheism, nor did any of them prescribe the worship of the one true God, and of him only, 78, 79. A complete system of morality not to be found in the writings of any one philosopher, 79—nor in them all collectively considered, *ibid.* Their sentiments, for want of a proper divine authority, could not pass for laws obligatory to mankind, 80, 81. Many of the philosophers were wrong in the fundamental principles of morals, 83. Some of them denied that any thing is just or unjust by nature, but only by human law and custom, 84, 85—others made man's chief good consist in sensual pleasure, 85, et seq. The sentiments of those who are account-

ed the best of the Pagan philosophers and moralists considered, 107, et seq. They held, that law is right reason; but they generally derived the original of law, and its obliging force, from God, or the gods, 108, 109. They sent the people to the oracles to know the law of God, especially with respect to divine worship, 112—and gave it as a general rule, confirmed by the oracles, that all men should conform to the laws and religion of their country, *ibid*. But the way they seem chiefly to propose for men's coming at the knowledge of the divine law is, by the doctrines and instructions of wise men, i. e. of the philosophers, 112, 113. They spoke nobly of virtue in general, but when they came to particulars differed in their notions of what is virtue and vice, and what is agreeable to the law of nature and reason, or contrary to it, 114, 115. Some of the most eminent of them passed wrong judgments in relation to several important points of the law of nature, 117. They often erred in applying general rules to particular cases, 119. They were for the most part deficient and wrong with respect to the duty and worship proper to be rendered to God, which yet they acknowledged to be of the highest importance, 120. They all encouraged the worship of a multiplicity of deities, 121. Swearing by the creatures was not forbidden by them, 123, et seq. They gave good precepts and directions about civil and social duties, 124, 125. Some of them said excellent things concerning the forgiveness of injuries, but were contradicted by others of great name, 127. They were generally wrong in that part of morals which relates to purity and continence, and the government of the sensual passions, 109, et seq. Many of them chargeable with unnatural lusts and vices, which they reckoned among things of an indifferent nature, 130, et seq. They generally allowed of fornication, as having nothing in it sinful, or contrary to reason, 137, 138, 139. Many of them pleaded for suicide as lawful and proper in some cases, 192. 204. N. They made high pretensions of leading men to perfect happiness in this present state, abstracting from all regard to a future reward, 211. 223. Notwithstanding they said such glorious things of virtue, they did not clearly explain what they understood by it, *ibid*. They were generally loose in their doctrine with regard to the obligation of truth, and thought lying lawful when it was profitable, 225, 226.

*Philosophers*—the great corrupters of the antient tradition concerning the immortality of the soul and a future state, 238. There were whole sects of them that professedly denied it, *ibid.* They who set up as advocates for it placed it for the most part on wrong foundations, 234. It was a general notion among them, that the human soul is a portion of the divine essence, 325, et seq. They universally held the pre-existence of the soul, and from thence argued its immortality, 327, 328. Some of their arguments tended to prove that the soul is naturally and necessarily eternal, 332, 333. Hence their doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul was censured by some of the primitive fathers of the Christian church, 333. They also taught the transmigration of souls, which tended greatly to deprave the doctrine of a future state, 336. Those of them who talked in the highest terms of the future happiness were for confining it to souls of special eminence; and did not teach the doctrine of eternal life and happiness to all the good and righteous without exception, 338, et seq. The best of the philosophers, amidst all their arguings, often spoke doubtfully about a future state, 343, et seq. In their consolations to their friends, and in their discourses against the fear of death, they generally expressed themselves in a way of alternative, 345, 346. Their fluctuations and seeming contradictions, were not merely owing to the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric doctrine, but to the uncertainty of their own minds, 351, 352. They did not apply the doctrine of a future state to its proper ends and uses; and laid little stress on future rewards in their exhortations to virtue, *ibid.* et seq. To supply the want of this, they cried up the self-sufficiency of virtue as its own reward, abstracting from all consideration of a future recompence, 352, 353. With the same view they asserted, that a short and temporary happiness is as good as an eternal one, 356, 357. They did not generally believe future punishments. See *Punishments*.

*Plato*—directs to follow the Delphian Apollo as the best guide in matters of religion, 112—seems to advise the abstaining from oaths, and yet oaths are very frequent in all his works, 123. He would have the Greeks behave in a very friendly and brotherly manner towards one another, but approves their regarding and treating the Barbarians, a name



they bestowed upon all other nations but their own, as by nature their enemies, 126, 127—prescribes a community of wives in his commonwealth, 133—gives great liberties to incontinency, not reconcileable to the rules of modesty and decency, 134. He allows and in some cases prescribes the exposing and destroying children, *ibid.* See also 48. Teaches, that lying is lawful when it is profitable, and in a fitting or needful season, 225, 226. He pleads in all his works for the immortality of the soul, 315—and often represents the rewards and punishments of a future state in a popular and poetical manner, *ibid.* He also speaks of them in a more refined and philosophical sense, *ibid.* et 316. The transmigration of souls is what he frequently asserts, 317. He also maintains the pre-existence of the human soul, and from thence endeavours to prove its immortality, 328. He sometimes argues, as if he thought the soul was properly eternal by the necessity of its own nature, 332. He manages his doctrine of a future state so as to answer political ends and purposes, 339—but represents the belief of it as of great importance to the cause of virtue, 357, 358. The doctrine of future punishments, is recommended by him as a most antient and sacred tradition, 273. 364. He frequently insists upon those punishments, and asserts some of them to be eternal, *ibid.* et 365—yet he sometimes expresses himself in a manner that seems not to admit of punishments in a future state; and finds fault with those representations, as tending to discourage the people, and make them afraid of death, 368, 369.

*Pleasure*—The scheme of those philosophers who made sensual pleasure the chief good considered, 85, et seq. Some of our moderns have carried this doctrine farther than Epicurus himself, 88, 89, N. 93.

*Pliny*, the natural historian—thinks a timely death one of the greatest blessings of nature, and that it is what every man may procure for himself, 193. He openly declares and argues against the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and a future state, 387. N.

*Plotinus*—talks in the same extravagant strain with the Stoics, of self-sufficiency and apathy, and the absolute indifferency of all external things, 165. A proud saying of his, *ibid.*—seems to approve self-murder in some cases, 204. N.—supposes

the human soul to be of the same nature with the soul of the world, 326, 327.

*Plutarch*—looks upon Lycurgus to have been a divine man, 42—expresses a great esteem and admiration of his institutions and laws, not excepting those of them which have an appearance of being contrary to good morals, 45. 47. 136. He represents the immortality of the soul as a matter of antient tradition, and which ought to be believed, and produces arguments for it, 322—yet at other times he speaks dubiously about it, and as if he looked upon it to be only an agreeable fable, not founded on any solid reasons, 347. He represents the remarkable effects which the hope of future happiness had upon them that believed it; and the account he gives suits the primitive Christians, but seems not well applicable to the antient Pagans, 360, 361. He rejects future punishments, and treats the fear of them as vain and childish, and the effect of a foolish superstition, 373, 374.

*Poets*—The most antient of them represent the immortality of the soul, and a future state, as generally believed among the nations, 273. They often speak of future punishments, 366—yet there are many passages, both of the Greek and Latin poets, which speak of death as putting a final period to our existence, and extinguishing all sense of good and evil, 392, 393.

*Polybius*—blames the great men and magistrates among the Greeks for rejecting the doctrine of a future state, and especially of future punishments, and propagating the disbelief of it among the people, 384, 385. To this he attributes the great want of honesty among the Grecians; yet he himself represents these things under the notion of useful fictions, *ibid.* et 385.

*Prayer*—A general practice among the Pagans, but chiefly intended for obtaining outward advantages, not for wisdom and virtue, 158. N.

*Priests, Heathen*—It was not looked upon as their proper office to teach men virtue, 34, 35.

*Puffendorff*—of opinion, that men usually come to the knowledge of natural law by education and custom, 14—and that the chief heads of that law were originally communicated to Adam by divine Revelation, and from him transmitted to his

descendants, 17. N. He proves, that a vague and licentious commerce between the sexes out of marriage is contrary to the law of nature, 141.

*Punishments*—The Stoics seem to have denied that any proper punishments are inflicted upon men by the gods, either here or hereafter, 150. 375, 376.

*Punishments, future*—The doctrine of future rewards necessarily connotes future punishments, 368—the belief of the former without the latter would be of pernicious consequence, *ibid.* The wisest of the Heathen legislators and philosophers sensible of the great importance and necessity of the doctrine of future punishments, 364, et seq. Celsus represents it as a doctrine taught by Heathens as well as Christians, that wicked men shall be subject to eternal punishments, 366, 367—yet it appears that the most celebrated philosophers really rejected that doctrine of future punishments, the belief of which they owned to be necessary to society, 367, et seq. The philosophic maxim that the gods are never angry, nor hurt any person, was generally so understood as to exclude the punishments of a future state, 374. 380, 381. The notion of future punishments seems to have been generally discarded among the Greeks in the time of Polybius, 384. It was believed among the Romans in the most antient times of their state, but was afterwards rejected and discarded even by the vulgar, 385, et seq. The Christian doctrine of a future state includes not only the rewards that shall be conferred upon the righteous, but the punishments which shall be inflicted on the wicked in the world to come, 413. The usefulness and importance of this part of the Gospel Revelation shewn, and that this doctrine as there taught is both reasonable and necessary, 415, et seq.

*Pythagoras*—held, that the human soul is a part of the divine substance, and that therefore it is immortal, 302, 303—and that after its departure from the body it is resolved into the universal soul, *ibid.*—yet he maintained the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which he learned of the Egyptians, *ibid.* He supposed it to be physical and necessary, but endeavoured to apply it to moral purposes, 303. According to Ovid he rejected future punishments, 304. He excepted some eminent souls from a necessity of transmigration, and supposed

them to go immediately to the gods, 306. It is hard to form a right notion of his scheme, which seems not to have been well consistent with itself, *ibid.* The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as he taught it, of little advantage to mankind, 309. He held periodical revolutions of the world, and that the same course of things shall return, and all things that have been done shall be done over again, *ibid.* See also 303. We cannot be sure of his real sentiments, as he made no scruple to impose upon his hearers, 309.

*Reason*—arguing from the nature and relations of things, may be of great use to lead men to the knowledge of moral duty, and to shew that it has a real foundation in nature, 8, 9—but this is not the ordinary way in which the bulk of mankind come to the knowledge of morals, 10. Reason is apt to be influenced by the passions to form wrong judgments in things of a moral nature, 11, et seq. Reason alone has not properly the force of a law to mankind, without the interposition and authority of a superior, 107, 108. If left merely to itself in the present state of mankind, it is not a safe and certain guide in matters of religion and morality, 421—yet it is a valuable gift of God, and in many respects of great advantage, especially when assisted by Divine Revelation, *ibid.* Men's having too high an opinion of the powers of their own reason, has often had a bad effect both in religion and philosophy, 422. N.

*Religion*—when it is of the right kind, and considered in its most comprehensive notion, takes in the whole of moral duty, and enforces it by a divine authority, and the most important motives, 34.

*Religion, Heathen*—as established by the laws, had no proper articles of faith necessary to be believed, nor proposed any settled rule of moral duty for directing and regulating the practice, 34, 35. It consisted properly in the public rites and ceremonies which were to be observed in the worship of the gods, *ibid.* The rites of their worship had in several respects a bad influence on the morals of the people, 36.

*Resurrection of the body*—denied and ridiculed by the philosophers of Greece and Rome, 394. Some notion of it said to have obtained among the Eastern Magi, *ibid.* It might have been part of the original tradition derived from the beginning together with the immortality of the soul, *ibid.* It obtained



among the Jews long before the time of our Saviour, but their notions of it obscure and gross, 394. 395. The tenet of the transmigration of souls might have arisen from a corruption of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; as also the notion, which obtained among many nations, that after their death they would have the same bodily wants and be in the same condition which they are in at present, 395, 396. The notion of the resurrection taught by our Saviour and his apostles noble and sublime, and leads to spiritual ideas, 397. 405.

*Revelation, divine*—one way of communicating to men the knowledge of morals, 12. The great usefulness of the Christian revelation for that purpose, 31. 232, et seq. See *Morality*.

*Reunion*—or refusion of the soul at death, or soon after it, into the universal soul, taught by the Stoics and other philosophers, 289. 296. 307, 308—not to be understood of a moral but a physical union, 289. It is quite different from the Christian doctrine of the beatific vision and enjoyment of God, 307, 308. It was supposed to be common to all souls without distinction, not peculiar to the innocent and righteous, *ibid*. If there was any happiness provided for departed souls, it was supposed to be previous to the reunion in which souls lost their individual subsistence, *ibid*.

*Romans, antient*—their character, 29. 57. The custom of exposing children continued long among them, 60---their cruel treatment of their slaves, *ibid*.—their gladiatory shews contrary to humanity, and destroyed more men than the wars, *ibid*.---unnatural lusts very common among them, especially in the latter times of their state, 62.

## S.

*Sacrifices*---a part of the primitive religion, originally of divine appointment, 21.

*Sages, Eastern*. See *Eastern*.

*Sceptics*---denied, that any thing is in its own nature honest or dishonest, base or honourable, but only by virtue of the laws and customs which have obtained among men, 84.

*Seneca*—says, it is a narrow notion of innocence to measure a man's goodness only by the laws, 38---asserts, that no man in his sound reason fears the gods, 151---and that it is neither in their power or inclination to hurt any one, *ibid*. Extravagant

- strains of Stoical pride and arrogance in his writings, 155---raises a wise man to an equality with God in virtue and happiness, *ibid.*---seems to make prayer unnecessary, yet at other times advises to it, 157, 158---justifies Cato's drunkenness, 191---pleads for self-murder, 163---uncertain in his notions about the immortality of the soul, and a future state, 291. He sometimes speaks nobly of future happiness, *ibid.*---at other times expresses himself doubtfully about it, *ibid.*---and sometimes positively affirms, that the soul is void of all sense after death, and that a man is then in the same condition he was in before he was born, 292, 293. He absolutely rejects future punishments as vain terrors invented by the poets, and asserts that a dead man is affected with no evils, *ibid.* et 372, 373.
- Shaftesbury, Earl of*—A passage of his relating to the clearness of the moral sense examined, 7.
- Sin*—according to the principles laid down by Marcus Antoninus, necessary and unavoidable, 176, 177—can do no hurt, either to particular persons, or to the whole, 179—contributes in the Stoical scheme to the harmony of the universe, *ibid.*
- Socrates*—the first among the Greeks that made morals the proper and only subject of his philosophy, and brought it into common life, 83—was wont to consult the Oracles, to know the will of the gods, 112—takes notice of some unwritten laws which he supposes to be of divine original, and common to all mankind, 115, et seq.—represents the worshipping, not one God only, but the gods, as the first and most universal law of nature, *ibid.* It was a custom with him to swear, but especially to swear by the creatures, 123. He is charged with incontinence, and making use of prostitutes, 137. He taught the immortality of the soul, and a future state, 190, et seq. He sometimes gives a noble account of future happiness, but seems to confine it principally to those who had made a great progress in wisdom and philosophy, 311—mixes his doctrine of a future state with that of the transmigration of souls, *ibid.*—gives a mean idea of the happiness reserved for the common sort of good and virtuous men after death, 312. Cicero's summary of Socrates's doctrine concerning a future state, 312, 313. None of his disciples, but Plato and his followers, taught the immortality of the soul as the doctrine of their School, 319. Most of the arguments produced by him in the Phædo

for the immortality of the soul, weak and inclusive, 334. He expresses his hope of it in his last discourse when he was going to die, but does not pretend to a certainty, 344. He represents the belief of it as of great importance to the cause of virtue, 358, 359—but says, it was disbelieved by most of the people among the Athenians and Greeks in his time, 382.

*Soul of Man*—strange diversity of opinions among the philosophers about the nature of the human soul, 285. The most eminent of them from the time of Pythagoras, maintained that it is a portion of the divine essence, 325, 326. N.

*Sparta*, and *Spartans*. See *Lacedæmonians*.

*Stoics*—the most eminent teachers of morals in the Pagan world, 145—highly admired and extolled both by antiquity and moderns, *ibid.* et 146. Observations on their maxims and precepts with regard to piety towards God, 147, et seq. One great defect in all their precepts of piety, is, that they generally run into the polytheistic strain, and are referred promiscuously to God and the gods, 147, 148. Their scheme tended to take away the fear of God as a punisher of sin, 149, et seq. and advanced such a notion of the divine goodness as is scarce consistent with punitive justice, 150. They proposed to raise men to a state of self-sufficiency and independency, 152, 153. Extravagant strains of pride and arrogance in some of the principal Stoics, 154, 155. Confession of sin before God, and sorrow for it, made no part of their religion, 159, 160. The resignation to God, for which they are so much admired, was in several respects different from that meek submission to the divine will which Christianity requires, 160, 161, N. Evangelical humility had not properly a place in their system of morals, 166. They gave many good precepts concerning benevolence and social duties, but their doctrine of apathy was not well consistent with a humane disposition and a charitable sympathy, 167, et seq. They said excellent things concerning forgiveness of injuries, and bearing with other men's faults, but in some instances carried it to an extreme, and placed it on wrong foundations, 173, et seq. Their pretence that no injury can be done to a good man, leaves no proper room for his forgiving injuries, 178, 179. Some of the Stoics taught that pardoning mercy was inconsistent with the character of a wise man, 184, 185. They talked in high strains of governing the

fleshly appetites, and yet the heads and leaders of that sect were very loose, both in their doctrine and practice, with respect to purity and chastity, and gave great indulgence to the sensual passions, 187, et seq. See also 138, 139. They were favourable to drunkenness, 190, 191—allowed, and even in several cases prescribed self-murder, 193, et seq. They proposed to lead men to perfect happiness in this present life, without regard to a future state; and to this end asserted the absolute self-sufficiency of virtue, and the indifferency of all external things, 208, et seq. It was a principle with them that a wise man is happy in the highest degree, merely by the force of his own virtue, under the severest torments, 209, 210. Their scheme in several respects not consistent with itself: and they were obliged to make concessions which cannot be well reconciled to their principles, 214, 215. Their philosophy in its rigour not reducible to practice, and had little influence either on the people or on themselves, 219, 220. They did not give a clear idea of the nature of that virtue of which they said such glorious things, 221, et seq. They taught that lying in words is lawful and allowable on many occasions, 225. The immortality of the soul was not a doctrine of their school, 286, 287. Some of them held, that the soul is absorbed at death into the soul of the world, and then loses its individual subsistence, 288—others supposed it to subsist for some time after death, but that it shall be dissolved and resumed into the soul of the universe at the conflagration, 289. Their doctrine of successive periodical dissolutions and conflagrations of the world, and the restitution of all things precisely to the state they were in before, not well consistent with a state of future retributions, 290, 291. N. They held, that some great and eminent souls after death became gods, but that even these were to be dissolved at the conflagration, 290. It was a maxim with them, that duration is of no importance to happiness, and that a temporal felicity is as good as an eternal one, 356, 357. They maintained, that nothing is profitable but what is honest; which is true, if a future recompence be taken into the account, but does not always hold if confined only to this present life, 354, 355.

*Suicide*—recommended by many of the philosophers and especially by the Stoics, 192, et seq.—censured by some philoso-



phers, and condemned in some countries by the laws of the state, 200, 201. The Roman laws gave too great allowances to it, 201. Some of our modern Deists plead for it, 204. The absurdity and pernicious consequences of it shewn, 205, 206.

*Swearing*—common among many of the philosophers, 123, 124, 125. None of them forbid swearing by the creatures, *ibid.*

*Sykes, Dr.*—lays it down as a principle, that the right knowledge of the one true God is the great foundation of morality, 29—asserts, that the light of natural reason, merely by its own force, discovered to the Heathens the whole of moral duty, without any assistance from Divine Revelation, 75, 76—says that it was the philosophic notion among the Greeks from the time of Pythagoras, that the human soul is a portion or section of the divine substance, 325, 326. N.

## T.

*Tables, laws of the twelve.* See *Laws.*

*Theophrastus*—held, that the suffering great outward evils and calamities is incompatible with a happy life, 211—for which he was blamed by the other philosophers, *ibid.*

*Timæus Locrus*—held the transmigration of souls; and that it is necessary to instil into the people the dread of future punishments; yet seems not to have believed them himself, 304.

*Tradition*—There were several customs derived by a most ancient tradition from the first ages, and common to all nations, and which probably had their original from a Divine appointment. 25. N.

*Transmigration of souls*—taught by the Egyptians, who represented it as the effect of a physical necessity, yet applied it to moral purposes, 303. It was maintained by all the philosophers who taught the immortality of the soul, 335. It was a great corruption of the doctrine of a future state of retributions, and tended to weaken and defeat the good effects of it, 336.

*Truth*—Many of the philosophers looked upon truth to be no farther obligatory than as it is profitable; and lying to be lawful when it is so, 225, 226. Some of our modern Deists of the same sentiments, 227.

## V.

*Virtue*—The doctrine of the absolute self-sufficiency of virtue to happiness, even under the severest torments, examined, 212, 213. The philosophers generally supposed virtue to consist in living according to nature; but did not clearly explain what is to be understood by it, 221, et seq. Many of them represented it to be equivalent to the τὸ καλόν, or honestum, but were far from being agreed as to what actions come under that character, 228, 229.

*Virtue, divine*—of the Platonists, considered, 121, 122, 123. N.

*Voltaire, Mons. de*—says that nature, attentive to our desire, leads us to God by the voice of pleasure, 87. N. Purity and chastity seems not to enter into his scheme of the religion and law of nature, 142.

## W.

*Wives, community of.* See *Community*. Custom of lending their wives common at Sparta, and prescribed by Lycurgus, 47—approved by Plutarch, *ibid.* et 136—and by the Stoics, *ibid.*—pleaded for by Mr. Bayle, *ibid.*

*Worship*—of one God, and of him only, not taught by any of the philosophers, 77, 78. The worship of the gods represented by Socrates as the first law of nature, 115.

*Zeno*—the father of the Stoics, extolled as a man of eminent virtue, and had great honours decreed him on that account by the magistrates and people of Athens, yet was chargeable with great vices, and unnatural impurities, 188. He held the community of women, 189—and the indifferency of incestuous mixtures, 137—and put an end to his own life, 197.

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